

ILLUSTRATED TIMES

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Nos. 86 & 87.—VOL. III.

LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1856.

DOUBLE (PRICE FOUR PENCE.
NUMBER.) STAMPED, 5d.

CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER



THE CHRISTMAS FOOL OF THE MIDDLE AGES.—(DRAWN BY KENNY MEADOWS, THE BORDER BY H. N. HUMPHREYS.)

CHRISTMAS FOR EVERYBODY.

THE year that came in so boastful and bellicose a young heir, breathing pikes and hand-grenades, seeking the "hubble reputation at the cannon's mouth," on blood-stained Sedan and death-hurling Molakhoff, has grown older and older, slowly and surely, inevitably and irrevocably, but, let us thank Heaven, peacefully. Now that the fiat has gone forth that EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX must die; now that the October winds, eddying the fallen leaves, has soured fitfully and mournfully in our ears the Banshee of fifty-six, or like a dog howling for one that is mortally sick; now that the mists of November have come trooping about the moribund old man like the Eumenides pursuing Orpheus; now that December has been half smooth, iron frost, like the coldness that comes upon sycophants and parasites when they feel their monarch is departing and can grant them but few more favours, and leave him to his fate as Louis XV.'s courtiers left him to pay court to the Dauphin, so hurriedly, so rapidly, that the noise of their departure was "a sound like thunder;" half this frost, and half tears, such as those repentant ones that Mary shed—such as those that flow from the eyes of good and faithful servants, when a kind and just master lies on his death bed; now that the year is given over—that he has borne his sore affliction long enough, that physicians are in vain, that he has made, and signed, and sealed his will, and that young Squire January is anxious (though decorously mournful of course) to come into his own. Now that this lordly year, this mighty year, this year of Fleets, and Armies, and Treaties, and Coronations, has but six more days to live, comes there, in merry and gladness, a ray of happy sunshine to gild the last week he is to pass on this side eternal ages—comes the ray with whole troops of angels sliding down it, "making a sunshine in a shady place" the shadiest of our dreary, dark December—comes the ray full of hope, full of promise, full of joyful confirmation; for it comes, thank God, once every year, comes to bless and gladden every year that lies a dying, and has done so, bringing with it blessings and kindly memories untold, any time these nineteen centuries. For the ray is called CHRISTMAS.

Never mind the old year '56 now; whether he was a good year with many imperfections, or a bad year with some good qualities. Let the poor old gentleman be worked off comfortably—let him be buried decently, and don't let's put too many lies, by way of epitaph, on his tombstone. Perhaps the best thing to say about him would be this—that there decidedly have been many worse years than he; but that we unfeignedly hope there may, in the time to come, be very many better ones. Our present business is with Christmas.

Christmas for Everybody. Is our title a misnomer? Lives there a man too high or too low in the social scale (whatever that "social scale" may be, but we imagine it to be the difference between the worm on the leaf and the worm on a blade of grass)—lives there duke or dustman, too haughty or too humble, to enjoy Christmas? Verily, beyond the Great Message which was published to a hundred worlds, when

"The shepherds on the lawn,
Or e'er the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row,
Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below.
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep!"

when the crystal spheres rang out to bless human ears, and "speckled Vanity" began to sicken (alas, she died not that first Christmas morn!) and Peor and Baalim forsook their temples, and mooned Ashtaroth sat unbegirt with tapers, and the Lybic Hammon shrank his horn, and rullen Moloch fled; and faster-flying still were the "brutish gods of Nile," Isis and Orus, and the dog Anubis; and Osiris was seen no more within the Memphian grove; besides that Message of the new and better revelation which came to poor benighted, blinded, wrongdoing humanity, on that transcendent morn of the Nativity, which that blind old man who wrote "Paradise Lost" has described so gloriously; besides the Sacred Festival, which millions of Christians—separated by race, by manners, by thousands of miles of mount, and stream, and sea—are at this very Christmas time celebrating, is there not another festival of humanity that comes home to every English heart?—that admirable, and I hope undying, custom of making Christmas a secular as well as a sacred festival—of unbending, of handshaking, yes, and of jollification;—not imitating the saturnalia of a Russian Easter, the fripperies and follies of a Roman carnival, the raving madness of the old Mysteries, the dull grossness of a Belgian Kermesse, the theatrical, empty vanities of a French Imperial *fête*, which may be succinctly and alliteratively described as all bunnies and no beef,—but socially, cheerfully, and in strict moderation; keeping ourselves virtuous, but having, at the same time, a sufficiency of "cakes and ale," and a modicum of ginger, "to be hot in the mouth withal!"

Christmas for Everybody! The Queen, Heaven bless her, has her Christmas, and we are sure keeps it right merrily, and in right good style. We wonder whether it would be high treason to surmise that at some remote period, long before the Prince of Prussia's expressive countenance had been seen (in a matrimonial point of view) in Britain; when the princes and princesses were very little highmignitinesses indeed, on some occasion one of the Royal Innocents may have consumed a few more "goodies" than were consonant with the preservation of health, to the agony of the Royal nurses, the despair of the pages of the backstairs, and the sending for of Sir James Clarke and Mr. Brown the apothecary next day, and the immediate rise of rhubarb and magnesia in the drug market. We hope it isn't high treason, this surmising supposition—totally uncalculated for as it is, besides—but it may, perhaps, amount only to *les majesté*. The Queen's Christmas we know must be a magnificent scene of festive hospitality. There is "humming ale"—where, or when, or why it hums, we are totally unable to state; perhaps, it hums only in the head of the amateur of fine old humming ale, who has consumed it to an extent slightly exceeding moderation. There is the Royal Baron of Beef, which at the Royal buffet of gold plate is carved by the Royal carver—(a Baronet at least)—and dispensed to the Royal flunkies, who carry it to the Royal guests. What they do with it is uncertain, for we believe it to be contrary to etiquette to eat roast beef at the Royal table; we presume they put the Christmas viand in their pockets, and place it in a glass case, as a memento of her Majesty's Christmas. But we know that there is a baron of beef carved at the Royal sideboard—we are as certain of the fact as the editor of that famous daily journal is certain about Lord A.—b.—n's Russian pension, and Mr. Disraeli's cork leg. We are certain, we say, for we have seen the impressive tableau ourselves—in a picture.

We confess that we shouldn't care much about dining at Windsor Castle this or any Christmas; because we have also heard that it isn't etiquette to speak at the Royal table unless you are spoken to; and we don't think we should be allowed to make the "Alderman and gold chain" joke when the turkey and sausages came up; neither, we imagine, should we be permitted to take the sprig of holly out of the plum-pudding, and stick it in our buttonhole; and we are very much afraid that there would be no "hunt-the-slipper" in the evening, and not an inch of mistletoe to be seen between St. George's Hall and the Rubens room. And we shouldn't like to offend against the dreadful Median and Persian laws of etiquette, or happening to do so, to be conveyed from the banqueting-room by the yeoman of the guard, and ordered for instant execution on the top of Henry VIII.'s gateway.

Still, declining that invitation, which we shall never receive, to a quiet family dinner at Windsor, we should like to see the Queen's Christmas, not only at Windsor, but every other one of her palaces—in every place where her gentle presence and womanly sway are felt. We should like to see how the Windsor old women are comforted with frieze-cloaks and flannel-petticoats; how the Osborne labourers are regaled with solid beef and pudding, and their children's eyes gladdened with nuts and oranges; how

the Balmoral cottagers are made comfortable with plaids, and meal, and malt; how the almost innumerable pensioners of Royalty—we don't mean the aristocratic pensioners, but the real poor pensioners—of whom we never reek when we grumble at the Civil List, are fed and comforted with wine, and bread, and meat, and coals, and money. We should very much like to see how the well known munificence of her Majesty's Consort is exercised towards his dependents—quietly, unostentatiously, but with a large and liberal hand; we should like most of all to see how the Hope of England, the young Prince of Wales, has been brought up to regard Christmas as a time when all must rejoice, and the rich rejoice more in helping those who have all the will, but little means, Heaven knows, for rejoicing at all.

Christmas for Everybody! Has not the Statesman his Christmas? To be sure he has, and enjoys it bravely. He doesn't dine out, even with Royalty; to use a very familiar expression, the Statesman "bolts" right away to his ancestral seat, or to the country-house he has rented or purchased, as the case may be. When there, we thoroughly believe that the Noble Viscount, or Right Honourable Gentleman at the head or tail of affairs, utterly forgets for the nonce the very existence of such things as red tape, official forms, despatch-boxes, protocols, and "the way not to do it." We further believe, that if he reads at all, he reads "Little Dorrit," and roars at the description of the Circumlocution Office, and says, that Dickens is a droll fellow, and that he should like to give him a berth. We finally believe that taking two hats, or two footballs, or two sofa-pillows, he kicks them from one end of the room to the other, saying, "That for Bolgrad the hamlet," and "That for Bolgrad the town;" then crying out, "I'll execute the Treaty of Paris, and close the Sulina mouths of the Danube," he kisses his family all round, gives Christmas-boxes to all his servants, is caught at "blindman's-buff" three times on Christmas evening, and sings a comic song as he goes upstairs to bed.

Christmas for Everybody, and especially for the pensioners of the poor-boxes of the police-courts. There is a band of benevolent individuals, obstinately keeping their names concealed, obstinately persisting in sending bank-notes, cheques, sovereigns, post-office orders, and stamps—not, indeed, at Christmas only, but at all seasons of the year, but especially, and with much greater liberality, at the time of feasting. Unknown to the public, we have said, they persist in remaining incognito; but, bless you, they know each other intimately—not in the flesh, we will allow to be probable, but in the spirit. They have a spiritually sympathetic club where they meet and jump for joy, skipping like the little hills, and crying out lustily, "Christmas for everybody, ho! ho! Beef for the beefless, and clothes to cover the naked, and small sums for chandleries and grocery to comfort the widow and dry the tears of the fatherless." And then they separate, this mythical club, singing, not, "We won't go home till morning," but "Oh no, we never mention it, our names are never known!" And they don't mention it, but go on sending funds to the poor-boxes like genial Christians and Christmas keepers, as they are. For they all keep tremendous Christmases, of course.

There is a story in a dreadful arithmetic book—is it Cocker, is it Walk-in-gate?—about a penny, which, put out to interest in some remote age, at compound interest, would have brought in some fabulous amount of wealth at this time. If that TWOPENCE which a certain Samaritan left at the inn for a wounded man had been so financially treated, it would, at compound interest, have given us such an enormous amount of charity, that there would be not a tear nor an aching heart to be found the whole world through. But the funds have been embezzled, mismanaged, put into the wrong hands, the accounts have been "cooked" by roguish secretaries, the moneys have been "borrowed" by knavish directors. Financial morality is at such a low ebb just now, that we don't wonder at the indecision frequently evinced by the public as to the best bank in which to invest their cash. All things considered, we think about the best and safest investment will be the "Royal British Poor Box."

Christmas for Everybody! Advocating the universal extension of enjoyment, wishing all, high and low, rich and poor, heartily and sincerely, present pleasure and future prosperity, will it be considered egotism on our parts, if, in conclusion, we speak for one moment of Christmas in connection with ourselves; and that only humbly to hope that this, our Christmas piece, may not be unacceptable to our readers; that the efforts we have made in the following pages to raise a laugh, harmless, but hearty, to cheer, with pleasant fancies and innocent conceits, the younger branches—yes, and the elder branches too—may be taken as a slight proof of the sincerity with which we wish all our friends

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

G. A. S.

HUBERT VAUGHAN.

A CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT STORY.

INTRODUCTION.

A CHRISTMAS story? Well, I'll try—
Nay leave the fire, we need no blaze;
Let me among the embers spy
For hinted shapes of former days.
Aid me with what you'd fancy most—
Jest, murder, fairy-tale, or ghost?

Well! we have laughed enough to-night—
The children's noise half stuns me yet:
The Fairy-tale is theirs by right.
And Sleep has claimed the rebel set—
(How well they kept the churl at bay,
Up to the knell of Christmas Day!)

Hobgoblins, I'm afraid, or ghosts
To us would glow with terrors dim;
For we have grappled armed hosts
Of earthly woes, and trials grim.
As many a vacant chair can say
Left here on many a Christmas Day.

And which of us can boast him young?
My hair is gray—my mother's white.
Warm-cherish'd hopes aside are flung—
'Tis late enough to look for night—
With all of us—'Tis late the noon is past—
I pray for a sunset calm at last!

The afternoon is calmest e'er,
If not most bright. The mid-day sun
Dazzles us with a blinding ray
Ere morning's mists are fairly gone.
Man—struggling, as through crowded streets,
Knows not if friend or foe he meets.

He knows them later in the day,
When he has clutched and lost the prize;
When thrown exhausted by the way,
He recollects kind words and eyes—
Rough helping hands or insults proud—
That crushed or raised him in the crowd!

Enough of this! A household's wreck—
Here, are we met on Christmas Day.
The morning clouds we've known to fleck
Our mutual love, have clear'd away.
On various rafts about long east,
We meet on peaceful shores at last.

All's chill without—all's warm within—
Dear wives—staunch friends—true brothers, here,
'Tis only Trial, Love, can win.
As Christmas crowns the wintry year—
In musing thus, my pen I've drawn:
Now for the tale of Hubert Vaughan.

I.

'Twas in the false and pinchbeck-time
Of horsehair wigs and useless swords,
There dwelt, in Devon's blessed clime,
The envy of surrounding lords,
A baronet of wealth and fame,
Sir Rowland Vaughan his honoured name.

He had two boys; a spendthrift fit, one,
A libertine and gamster rare—
No fault of his!—an elder son—
But train'd to think himself an heir!
The second was a student, mild—
Mere Hubert Vaughan, a younger child!

The old man died. The King is dead—
God save the King! The heir came home—
The ox was killed, the wine was shed,
The Pope may change, but Rome is Rome.
A monument Sir Rowland claims—
Then lives again, in style, Sir James.

The brothers loved each other well.
The libertine was rough, but kind;
He loved, between his cups, to dwell
On Hubert's worth and polish'd mind.
He vow'd the State had not a place,
Which Hubert was not fit to grace.

The baronet must take a wife:
He fix'd upon a gentle dame—
Swift yielded, as the lamb to knife,
When he made gleam his wealth and name.
He joy'd that Hubert liked his choice,
And thank'd him in a husky voice.

"But what for you? old Hubert, say;
You want a wife as well as I.
Fix on a wench—the costs to pay
I'll quickly make the Georges fly.
I'll make you Minister of State—
Archbishop—duke—or something great."

"I love a maiden," Hubert smiled
And said, "You know her—Helen Gray."
"What! old Tom Gray, of Merton's child?
'I'll ride to Merton Court to-day."
He rode to Merton Court that night—
They found him dead by morning's light.

He had sat late with Merton's squire,
(A drunken boor, whose wealth might elude
To place his child and heiress higher
Than any younger brother's aim).
They quarrel'd, drank—with little reck;
Sir James rode home and broke his neck.

II.

Sir James was buried with his sire,
Sir Hubert Vaughan, at fitting tide,
Rode on to visit Merton's squire,
And ask fair Helen for his bride.
"Of course," replied the parent set,
"Now you're a baronet—why not?"

He felt ashamed of happiness—
Sir Hubert Vaughan—he loved the maid,
But with his former rank—(what less?)—
To dream of hope had been afraid.
He shamed to draw a hopeful breath,
Owed to a kindly brother's death.

But selfishness will win at last—
Or what would come of human life?
His brother's death was gone and past,
He had a future, and a wife
Who loved him—oh! with what a love!
And theirs was wealth, the world to move.

The schemes they wove—that gentle pair!
To make the world about them gay,
Sown in the soil of study bare,
And ripen'd by affection's ray!
How they would teach the world to live—
To love, and labour, and forgive!

One pet they had, beyond the rest,
His brother's widow, left forlorn;
Poor bird, all lonely in her nest,
How they would tend her, night and morn!
So James's love she yet might see,
Had James been spared himself to be!

She had not known a happy life,
And she was fading day by day—
Three months a careless drunkard's wife,
The widow's shock had ta'en away
Her vital spirits—(ne'er too high!)
Sir James's wife was doomed to die.

Sir Hubert watch'd her day and night,
And Helen, too—they would not wed—
They'd bring her back to health and light,
Or close her eyes upon her bed.
The old man grin'd "Romantic pair!
They're thankful she has left no heir."

One evening Hubert found old Gray,
With bottles broach'd and curtains drawn—
"My sister bore a son to-day—
I am no more Sir Hubert Vaughan.
The mother's dead." "So! ruz the bell;
More sack! and say, Good-bye to Nell."

III.

Ten years had pass'd—ten weary years,
To Hubert Vaughan and Helen Gray;
Long since they'd dried their latest tears,
And hope and fear had ebb'd away.
Vaughan's brow was plough'd with lines of woe,
And Helen's hair was streak'd with snow.

Both were unwed—the parent's greed
And tyranny had plac'd a ban
Upon their loves, when Fate decreed
Hubert, once more, a landless man.
They never met, but loved apart,
Each with a sullen, constant heart.

Yet duties come when hopes are flown.
Helen was bless'd the country through
For good that might not shrink unknown.
And Hubert had his work to do.
A pupil his attention claims,
His brother's heir—the young Sir James.

He loved the boy with all his heart,
And gave to him his mind and life,
The more from a repentant sinner,
The boy had lost his wealth and wife—
Hope, fortune—all before him fled!
And Hubert Vaughan had wished him dead.

A thought soon stifled! Hubert Vaughan,
Upon himself imposed a vow
To watch his nephew's mental dawn,
And—(wist himself might not be now.)
To make the lad, he bent his mind,
The benefactor of his kind!

And well the boy repaid his love,
For he was docile, quick, and brave;
His pranks and sallies oft would move
A smile on Hubert's visage grave.
"If I one honest man can train,"
He thought, "I have not lived in vain."

The treasures of his student lore,
He lavished on his brother's son,
And zealously his lands watch'd o'er—
Was parent, steward, friend in one.
"All very fine!" sneer'd old Tom Gray;
"He'll have Jim poison'd some fine day!"

IV.

'Twas Christmas Eve at Merton Court;
The house was filled with roaring guests—
Blades of the drunken master's sort—
With noisy laughs and vulgar jests.
No friend was there for Helen Gray.
"Hang thee!" said Tom; "then stop away!"

She sat within her lonely room,
Gazing upon the frost-laden lawn,
With thoughts of sadness—not of gloom—
All centering in Hubert Vaughan—
That stranger friend—that foeman dear—
That far-off neighbor—always near!

A footstep brushed the crackling grass:
She started with a woman's fears—
Back flew the door of latticed glass—
"Twas he she had not met for years.
What brought him then? some cause she knew
Of import fell. Her thought was true.

He did not move to touch her hand;
She did not scream, or faint, or bound.
She saw him 'gainst the moonlight stand,
And waited for his voice's sound;
He spoke in tones of chilling pain:
"I am Sir Hubert Vaughan again."

"My God! explain!"—"My brother's son
I left at sunset in the wood!
Beside him lies my own marked gun,
Clotted with Jax's frozen blood!
Stark evidence against me stands
I murdered him to gain his lands."

"Thou dost not so?"—"Oh, Helen Gray,
My better lie! to-morrow's dawn
Will find me on the waves away,
On the doom'd culprit, Hubert Vaughan.
None can my innocence allow,
As fate has chanced, save only thou."

"How was it, Hubert?"—"Forth we went—
(To make the boy a perfect man,
Body and mind, was my intent,
Equal to all that mortal can—
To make him hardy, wise, and true,
To dare, to suffer, and to do).

"We sought the woods—to bring down game,
Like planting corn or catching fish,
Has seemed to me a noble aim
For struggling man—'twas James's wish.
Enough! he took my gun and fell—
The gun went off and kill'd him—Well?"

"Well! Hubert?"—"I am cast for death
By England's laws—I'm fit to die,
I may not scape calumnious breath,
Yet death I could, but would not fly,
Till I had told my soul's own wife
I did not rob young James of life."

"Dost thou believe me innocent?
It not we ne'er may meet again
In earth or heaven?"—"With doubts sore rent
Poor Helen press'd her brows in pain;
Tigen led him to the lightest place
And looked him keenly in the face."

She summon'd all her woman's soul,
That magic wand by angels bless'd,
To find the truth—the real—the whole,
Sir Hubert stood the searching test.
Her arms about his neck she bent,
"Yes, Hubert, thou art innocent!"

"Thank God! thank God! 'twas all I sought:
I fear not death, yet cling to life;
We'll meet in heav'n—a kiss I've bought
To bear me hence—"—"Without thy wife?"
What hope was this found sudden birth?
"Hubert, we part not, e'en on earth."

She huddled on a homely cloak,
And clutched such trinkets she could find;
She heard her father's drunken joke
Borne through a door-chink on the wind.
She blessed him with a sigh long drawn,
Then, left the house with Hubert Vaughan.

With raiment scant, and beggar's purse,
They put to sea that Christmas Eve;
What was to them the nation's curse,
The winter's chill, the billow's heave?
They sat upon the arched deck,
Their arms about each other's neck.

They found the corpse of young Sir James
Next morning, by the early dawn;
A martyr's honours soon he claims,
Murdered, men said, by Hubert Vaughan.
Words bad enough for Helen Gray
The neighbours could not find to say.

Some cousin's son got Hubert's lands,
(He changed his name, and rose a peer.)
The exiles, safe on distant strands,
Lived, loved, and died—to all men dear.
Strong in their love, what need they dread?
My story's done; let's get to bed.

R. B. B.

CHRISTMAS A LONG TIME AGO.

Old Father Christmas, after his twelvemonth's leave of absence, has come back again to make us jolly and forget our troubles. He has come to end the old year to his grave with jokes and laughter. Anno Domini 1856, is sick and sinking, but when the smell of roasting turkey touches comfortably—going, and going as gradually as water cools. Father Christmas has got the job of burying him—that jolly undertaker, who is merrier than any mite that walks. The old year shall die, as huntsman Moody did, with a cheer about his bed, and brimming glasses raised above his body.

Father Christmas has greatly changed of late years. He used to be hard frosted and snow white, and he set everybody shivering, and made the eyes smart and water. Now he comes wiping his hot forehead, and with his waistcoat unbuttoned; winter has disappeared, and spring lasts six months instead of three. Christmas carries a flower in his mouth, and chews the fresh buds. He will ask if he can have green peas for dinner.

What has become of poor winter, that old housekeeper that minded England whilst the sun was on the Continent; who covered up the towns and villages with his snowy sheets, as they do the furniture of palaces when "My Lord" is away. He has left the earth to grow close and sodden with rain, instead of crisp and hard with frost. What has he done with the flour-dregger, from which he sprinkled his flakey snow upon the earth, making it as white as a corn-mill floor, and filling up the holes and smoothing down the land like a pillow? Where are the bald trees that threw out their long black branches to catch the floating flakes, and then stood stiff and formal as if afraid to rub the pearl powder from their skin of bark? The lakes and ponds are open as saucers, for they have lost their lids of ice, and England is moist and dirty. The ground is settling into paste, because winter has deserted us, and overgrown, unhealthy spring, pimpled with buds, comes before he is wanted.

God bless old Christmas, and the comforts he brings. He is the nation's peacemaker and joy-maker. He is the fine drawer of quarrels, the tinkler up of feuds, the revivor of friendships. Though the blows fell thick and strong in November, the bruises are forgotten before the year is out. He takes the sting out of a curse and gives to it the flavour of a joke. The Montagues and Capulets would never have quarrelled if they had kept Christmas Day in Verona; and then poor Romeo, instead of poisoning himself, would have married Juliet, an have had a large family of remarkably handsome children, and healthy. Then Miss Cushman and Fraulein Johanna Wagner would not have been able to appear in their best characters. Poor Romeo!

It is a blessed time, and all England hails it with delight. Everybody looks forward to it. The little boys and girls at school sit thinking, not of their lessons as they ought, but of "how long it wants" to the Christmas holidays. First they count the weeks, and then the days, and at last the hour, before they shall "be fetched." Who doesn't remember the last night before going home; how kind the masters were, letting you do what you liked; how it was impossible to sleep, for everybody talked in bed about who was to be at their house on Christmas Day, and how many half-crowns they would get as presents, and what games were to be played in the evening. Old Father Christmas was the inventor of Pantomimes, and that is one reason why schoolboys love him.

Look into that back room, behind the tailor's shop. There are piles and piles of new clothes—very shiny and stiff, and with clean linings and a great many seams showing. They must all be sent home in time for Christmas Day. Little bell-shaped jackets, waistcoats scarcely longer than gaiters, and trousers with pockets and strap-buttons, and too small for even your arm to go down. These are more of Father Christmas's gifts to the little boys. The gifts he intends sending to the little boys' papas are of a very different kind. The tailor has had a young gentleman who is a clerk in the city by day, and is "anxious to occupy his leisure at night" shut up in a room with a thick ledger before him; and the young man has filled up a great many bills with elegantly-printed headings. The youth writes a fine flourishing hand, and makes his T's with ends like vine tendrils, and his D's to December curl round and round like a watch spring. The tailor is very much obliged to Old Christmas, and so is the young man, for his dinner is now provided for, and that is off his mind.

Walk through the streets, and see the hubbub and the merry fuss that Old Christmas causes.

Look at the poulterers, and notice the rows and rows of turkeys hanging up by their legs in a state of nudity, waiting to be dressed for dinner. How ugly their breasts and thighs look until they are roasted! They have only a few black feathers in their wings, as if they hadn't been thoroughly shaved—about as many in proportion as an arrow has. The red bags under their throats makes you think the blood has flown to their heads from their stopping so long in the antipodean attitude. Cast a glance at the butcher's shop, and admire those fearful sides of beef lacquered over with yellow fat. Be kind enough to notice the entire carcasses of sheep. They look very shiny and sore; they are ornamented with stars most gracefully tattooed into the red parts. Notice the quality of the meat; just peep at the inside, where the stick keeps the ribs apart, like the seat in a canoe. Father Christmas sent that excellent boiling and roasting mutton up to London, as he also did these "legs and shoulders" hanging in rows, as thick as bells at an hotel, and those immense red lumps of beef that tremble when they are touched. There are a good many uncooked dinners in that shop. The butcher shouts out "Buy, buy," as if he thought so too; but Father Christmas has a rare appetite, and can play a wonderfully good knife and fork.

Go to the grocer's, where the fifty lamps are burning, and the poster headed "Prime Fruits" is stuck up outside. Did you ever see such mounds of "Valencians" at 10d., or such piles of "very superior currants" at 8d. They will all be boiling before the week is out. We don't know how a plum-pudding is made, but candied citron, with its mildew of sugar, must have something to do with it; and so have the sticks of cinnamon with which the square divisions of raisins are crossed, like heraldic quarterings. When the Cattle Show in Baker Street was open, thousands rushed to have a look at their future Christmas dinners, and to see how their beef looked whilst alive. Vans and omnibuses, full of the hungry sight-seers, paid their shillings, and felt the fat sides of the oxen that father Christmas had doomed to the spit. The rotund, grease-choked animals, endured the digs of umbrella ends and the pokes of stick ferules, that tested their elastic plumpness, little dreaming that their admirers were hungering after juicy slices, and thinking of mustard and horse radish. Prince Albert's fat ox must swing from butcher's hooks, and show how "beet and oilcake" can drape red meat with folds of fat, yellow and bumpy as nuggets. Pigs with cheeks that crush their eyes and noses into a snail compass, and crowd the face to choking, must be shown in sausage shops, and roll and grunt out their last hours in their condemned cell, with the fear of Epping and the horrors of saveloys to torment their last hours, and the roar of the chopping machine ringing in their ears. Poor pigs! why is pork so delicious with sage and onions? Stuffing has been your ruin; crisp crackling has brought you to this.

Old Father Christmas has made the householders in the suburbs nervous and anxious. The holy trees and the laurels which struggle through their smutty town life, and shed their leaves as black as though they mourned in erape their wretched lot, will be pulled up by the roots, and carried off in the night by desperate velvet men, and if their owners ever see them again, it will be swinging over a potato shop, and marked 6d. Christmas brings petty larceny as well as beef and pudding and laughter. The carriage drives in the country will be visited, and the mould of the shrubberies be trodden hard by boots with nails in them. Boughs with red berries, glowing like cigar ends, will be torn off at midnight, and the bark be haggled about the white stump that marks where the branch once grew. Perhaps we may have, sticking in the top of our own plum-pudding, a sprig of the very bough which caused a reward of £5 to be offered on the conviction of the purloiner. Never mind—we'll eat our slice, if we can, and send the plate up a second time! The pudding is innocent, although it does keep bad company!

So here is a jolly Christmas to all men! May all Englishmen and all their American and Australian varieties, be hungry on that day. Eat no lunch on the twenty-fifth next. Have a razor appetite—devour your beef with your eyes before your teeth shut upon it. Think of this, too, when you have cleared your plate, and you sit staring at the carver: on this day

there is not, God be praised! an empty stomach in England. Not a man, woman, or child in the land but has feasted on flesh, and known what it is to say, "No more." Who says Christmas is not a peacemaker? The stomachs are too full for anger to find its dark corner to hide in. Plum-pudding turns it out—strong ale drowns it. See those poor gruel-fed mortals who call the workhouse home. In their gray coats, in their blue-striped gowns, husband, wife, and child have once in the year eaten side by side; they have laughed merrily over their smoking plates, and the beef has given them such courage, that if you told them all men were equal, they would say, "Yes—very nearly," even though an over-seer was in the room. The sick and maimed, stretched on their hospital-beds, or panting in the exercising-grounds, will be reminded by some unexpected comfort that Christmas has come again. Voices grow softer, and tune themselves to pity's note, on this blessed festival. The old pensioner hobbles back to the almshouse, the crooked form weighed down still lower by the heavy basket that charity has packed with good things for the feast. Even in the prison, the convicted and the trespasser have the punishment of toil suspended, and birds perch on the tread-wheel steps, and the blisters raised by oakum-picking are left to heal. For one day, Christianity forgets and forgives, and bread is broken in peace.

In the back streets and in the squares, in the garret and in the palace, in the cellar and in the dining-hall, everybody has killed hunger. The tramp who dined on a turnip yesterday, whose bed is a haystack, whose washing-basin is a horse-trough, will hurry into the nearest town, and ring loudly at the workhouse-bell, and tell them to bring up dinner. A pot will boil on every garret fire, and meat turn frizzling on its string. From one to eight, England will smell of cooking, and be noisy with the clatter of knives and forks. Of all the thanksgivings offered up to Heaven on that day, none will rejoice the angels more than the sincere "Thank God!" which will leave every tongue when the feasting is over.

We are told, and there seems to be no doubt of it, that the rejoicings at Christmas time have taken the place of the feasts which were formerly held in honour of Saturn. Many of the ceremonies are very similar. The very feeling of equality and brotherly love which characterises the conduct of all men at Christmas time, is, the antiquarians state, derived from the ancient Saturnalia, when to teach the fortunate among mankind humility, masters were made to wait upon their servants; and for once James and Mary were allowed to fume and rave if "missus" was late with the dinner, or "master" didn't answer the bell as soon as it was rung. When the blessings of Christianity spread over the world, men turned from their idols; but they could not, it would seem, so easily break away from their customary feasts and rejoicings. So they still continued their merry-makings, merely altering the purport and intention of the ceremonies. They treated their feasts as they did their temples, destroying their idols, but preserving the building.

Formerly the festivities of Christmas lasted for twelve days. They began a week before Christmas Day, and were kept up till the old year was dead and gone, and the new one had taken possession of the almanack. Several days before the 25th, the poor people had a custom of going about with a vessel-cup, and singing carols before the houses; and in order to insure success to the undertaking, they started the superstition that to send a vessel-cup singer away from the door unrequited was to forfeit the luck of all the approaching year.

On St. Thomas's Day, the custom was "to go a gooding," which seems to have been done by women only; and in return for the charity-money they received, they presented the givers with sprigs of evergreen to decorate their rooms with. St. Thomas has been styled by a witty author the gentleman-in-waiting to Father Christmas "placed to usher us into the hall of seasonable festivity, for the woman he takes us by the hand we hear the clatter of dishes and the crackling of sticks in the kitchen, and even his breath, as he bids us welcome, is redolent in perspective of savoury things."

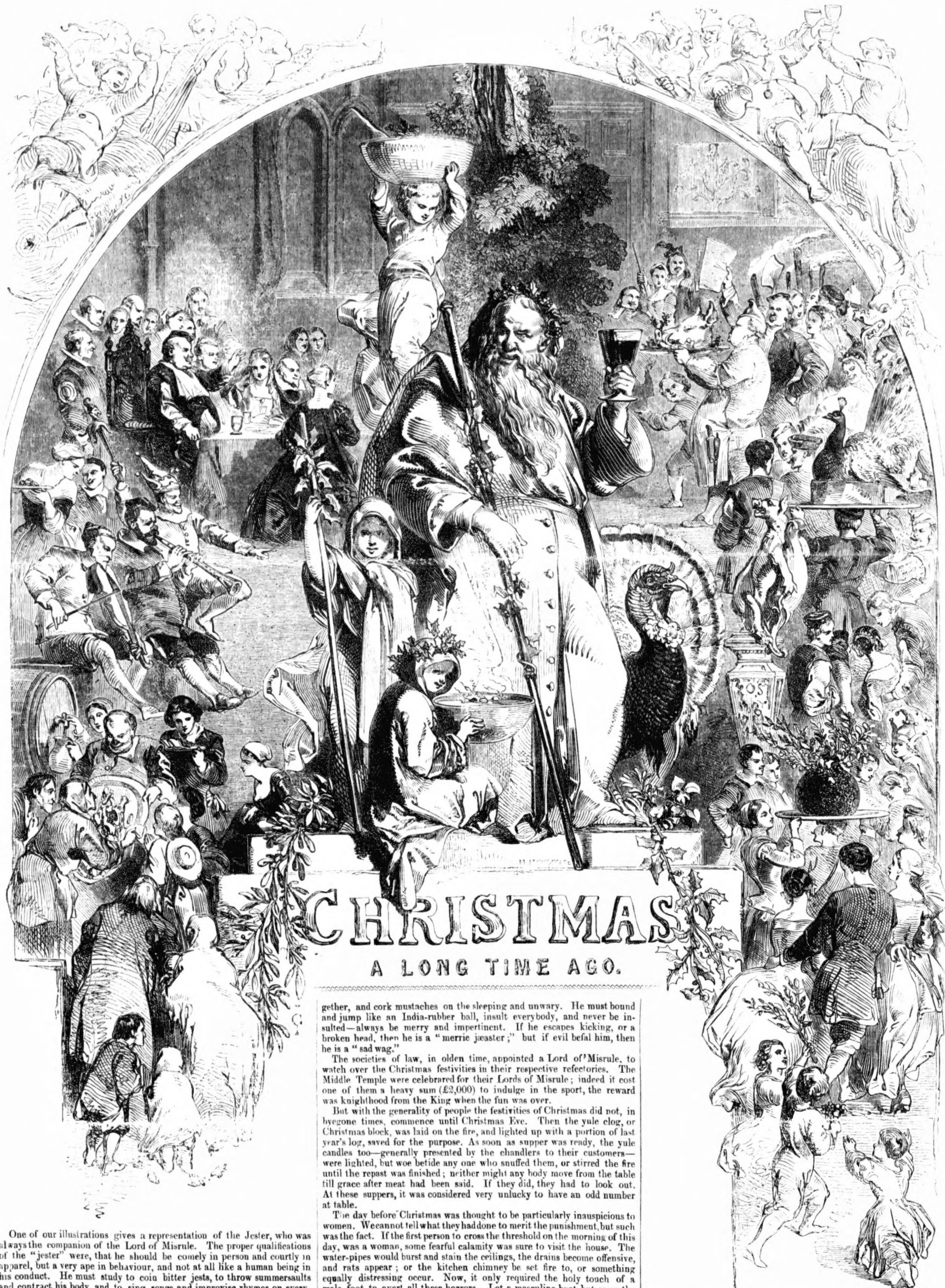
After the old dames had finished their "gooding trip," the little boys and girls made a begging excursion to the different houses. They bounced and beat at every door, with blows and lusty slaps, and sang a song or two, and then pence, nuts, plums, and pence were distributed among them, for they too had a superstition to back their claims—those who refused being tormented by "sprites, and creaked witches, and dreadful devils, black and grim," and such-like agreeable personages.

Masquerading has always been a favourite Christmas pastime. In olden time the men and women changed clothes, and, dressed in each other's garments, went from one neighbour's house to another, partaking of Christmas cheer, and "making merry with them in disguise." The ladies copied as closely as possible the manners of the gentlemen, paying very little attention to their own wives and a great deal to other people's, insisting upon stopping at table after the women had left, and occasionally coming home at four in the morning. What was termed "mumming" was invariably practised at this time of the year. Stow mentions a famous mumming which took place for the disport of young Prince Richard, son to the Black Prince. One hundred and thirty citizens, disguised as knights and esquires, headed by one, richly-arrayed like an emperor, and accompanied by one stately tired like a pope, followed by twenty-four cardinals, rode from Newgate through Cheap, over the bridge, through Southwark, and on to Kennington, "beside Lambeth, where the young Prince remained with his mother." They went with the sound of trumpets, sackbuts, cornets, shalmes and other minstrels, and innumerable torch-lights of wax. The maskers, when they reached the hall of the manor of Kennington, played dice with the young Prince, "which they so handled that the Prince did always winne when hee cast." The stakes were worth having, consisting of a "boule of gold, a cup of gold, and a ring of gold. They also lost gold rings to all the Prince's company." What would Queen Victoria say, if the London citizens were to attempt a similar compliment to the Prince of Wales? The gold "boule" would not be the only thing lost on the occasion, however skillfully the dice might be handled, but, in addition to their time, their liberties would be taken away, for they would be all locked up as sure as twelvemore make a shilling.

The grandest personage in these Christmas masqueradings, was the Lord of Misrule. His sovereignty lasted twelve days, and he was supposed to regulate the games and diversions of that season of festivity. The best description we have of the Lord of Misrule, his appointments and offices, is given in a very rare book, entitled, "Anatomie of Abuses," by Philip Stubbs, 1555. Stubbs was a hard, severe man, but a wonderful writer. He says:—

"Firste, all the wilde heades of the parish, convenyente together, chuse them a grand caitaine, (of mischief), whom they innoble with the title of my 'Lorde of Misrule,' and hym they crown with great solemnitie, and adopt for their Kyng. This Kyng anoynted chuseth forth twentie, fourte, three score, or a hundred iustie guttes like to hymself, to waite upon his lordlie majestie, and to garde his noble persone. Then every one of these his menne he investeth with his liveries of greene, yellowe, or some other light wanton colour. And as though these be not gaudy enough, I should saye, they besedde themselves with scarfes, ribbons, and laces, hangd all over with goide rynges, precious stones and other jewelles. This done, they tye about either legges twentie or fortie belles, with rich hande-kerchees in their handes, and sometimes laied across over their shoulders and neckes, borrowed for the most parte of their pretie Mopsies and looving Bessies, for kissing them in the darcke. Thus things sette in order, they have their hobbie-horses, dragons and other antiques, together with their pipers and thonderyng drummers, to strike up the Devilles daunce withall; then marche these heathen companie towards the church and churchyarde, their pipers piping, drummers thonderyng, their stumpes dauncing, their belles gyinglyng, their hande-kerchees swyngyng about their heades like madmen, their hobbie-horses and other monsters skyrmyshyng amongst the throng; and in this sorte they goe to the church, (though the minister bee at praiser or preaching) dauncing and winging their hande-kerchees over their heades in the church like devilles incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can here his owne voice. Then the foolish people they looke, they stare, they laugh, they flicke, and mount upon fornes and pewes, to see these goodly pageantes solemnised in this sort. Then after this aboute the church they goe againe and againe, and so forth into the churchyarde."

where, it appears, they had erected arbours, and the feast began. Stubbs threatens, in a fearful manner, all those "fantasticall fooles," who bring the Lord of Misrule and his complices—"some bread, some good ale, some newe cheese, some olde cheese, some custardes, some cakes, some flounes, some turtles, some creame, some meate—some one thing, some another." It would seem as if the Lord of Misrule, and his court, had a very pleasant time, despite the choleric outpourings of the savage Stubbs.



One of our illustrations gives a representation of the Jester, who was always the companion of the Lord of Misrule. The proper qualifications of the "jester" were, that he should be comely in person and courtly in apparel, but a very ape in behaviour, and not at all like a human being in his conduct. He must study to coin bitter jests, to throw summersaults and contract his body, and to sing songs and improvise rhymes on everything, with the ease of a Charles Sloman. Wine must make him tipsy in a few seconds, and he must make faces and roll his eyes, and thrust out his tongue, in the most comical manner possible. When he laughs, he should roar; and he must be always laughing, and make other people laugh too; and he must dance about the house, leap over tables, trip up his companions' heels, and generally misbehave himself. If a girl isn't looking, he must kiss her, and smack his lips and cry "sugar!" If an old gentleman is stooping, he must take a leap-frog jump over his back; and whenever or wherever boys cross his path, he must knock their heads to-

gether, and cork mustaches on the sleeping and unwary. He must bound and jump like an India-rubber ball, insult everybody, and never be insulted—always be merry and impertinent. If he escapes kicking, or a broken head, then he is a "merrie jester;" but if evil befall him, then he is a "sad wag."

The societies of law, in olden time, appointed a Lord of Misrule, to watch over the Christmas festivities in their respective refectories. The Middle Temple were celebrated for their Lords of Misrule; indeed it cost one of them a heavy sum (£2,000) to indulge in the sport, the reward was knighthood from the King when the fun was over.

But with the generality of people the festivities of Christmas did not, in bygone times, commence until Christmas Eve. Then the yule clog, or Christmas block, was laid on the fire, and lighted up with a portion of last year's log, saved for the purpose. As soon as supper was ready, the yule candles too—generally presented by the chandlers to their customers—were lighted, but woe betide any one who snuffed them, or stirred the fire until the repast was finished; neither might any body move from the table till grace after meat had been said. If they did, they had to look out. At these suppers, it was considered very unlucky to have an odd number at table.

The day before Christmas was thought to be particularly inauspicious to women. We cannot tell what they had done to merit the punishment, but such was the fact. If the first person to cross the threshold on the morning of this day, was a woman, some fearful calamity was sure to visit the house. The water-pipes would burst and stain the ceilings, the drains become offensive, and rats appear; or the kitchen chimney be set fire to, or something equally distressing occur. Now, it only required the holy touch of a male foot to avert all these horrors. Let a masculine boot but cross the threshold, and the family was safe. A kid boot with high heels would bring destruction in its wake; while a manly double-soled Blucher would usher in joy and happiness.

It is asserted that burning the yule clog, as well as the yule candles, and the mumming, and the decorations with evergreens, are all borrowed from the heathenish customs of the Saturnalia. What matter! We agree with Thomas Warmsey, that it leaves no charge of impiety to indulge in such mirth, "for since things are best cured by their contraries, it was both wisdom and piety in the ancient Christians, to vindicate such

times from the service of the devil, by appointing them to the more solemn and especial service of God."

"Upon the hearth pile up the fire,
And that it may burn clear and bright
Cast in it every base desire,
All envy, hatred, vengeance, spite;
Believe me, the event will show,
By acting in this way you'll gain,
For you will feel a genial glow,
Dance through each gladly-swelling vein,
And onwards to your very heart's core go."

Who, after reading this verse, would throw cold water on Christmas fire, simply because the old Roman heathens burned wood? They ate and drank too. Shall we, therefore, give up eating? No, so long as teeth will bite, or throat swallow, we will bless beef and ale.

"A bone, God Wot,
Sticks in my throat,
Without I have a draught
Of cornic ale,
Nappy and stale,
My lie lies in great waste.

"Now give us drink
And let cat wink.

I tell you all at once,
It sticks so sore,
I may sing no more,
Till I have drunken once."

That is the carol the minstrels used to sing in praise of ale during the Christmas banquet; and so long as ale is brewed, we care not whether it be a heathenish custom or not, we'll have no bones stick in our throat for want of a foaming tankard.

It was on Christmas eve, too, that the presents were sent of game and fruits intended to form part of the morrow's feast. The haunch of venison with the dangling hoof, the fat capons, the hares and rounds of beef, came tumbling into the hall as though the horn of plenty

had been emptied into the passage. With our ancestors, gift-making at Christmas was restricted to friends in the neighbourhood. But with us, John at Land's End may send a turkey to Jack at Newcastle, and it will arrive at its destination as sweet as a calf's breath. Have you ever seen a carrier's cart make the round of a country town on Christmas-eve? The cart is full of presents. Barrels of oysters, hampers with straw clipped round the lid, baskets of fruit, every kind of eatable, is stored away in the two-wheeled larder. When the parcel is delivered, how all the family rushes out to see what it is, and expectancy stands with its mouth open, whilst the string is being cut. If it is a guinea hamper, how each bottle is examined and guesses made as to what it is! How the cork is sniffed at, and the light held behind, and the colour of the liquid



CHRISTMAS SPORTS IN THE OLDEN TIME: THE SERVANTS' HALL.—(DRAWN BY KENNY MEADOWS, THE BORDER BY H. N. HUMPHREYS.)

disputed about. The carrier is examined as to who sent it, or who left it at the office. He earns his Christmas-box and glass of ale by making the mystery ten times more hazy than before he spoke. We have been told, that it is not an uncommon thing for carriers to be intoxicated on Christmas-eve, through drinking the healths of those to whom they bring presents.

One of the most extraordinary customs that formerly prevailed on Christmas Eve used to take place at a nobleman's house at Aston, near Birmingham. Here is an account of it:—

As soon as supper was over, a table was set in the hall. On it a brown loaf was placed, with twenty silver threepences stuck on the top of it. Pipes and tobacco, and a tankard of ale, were also brought in. Then the

oldest servants in the family took their seats at the head of the table and the ceremony began. The steward brought the servants, both men and women, by one at a time, covered with a winnow sheet, and putting their right hand on the loaf—exposing no other part of the body—left the two old fellows to make guesses as to whom the person was. They were only allowed one guess, and if they hit upon the right name, the steward led the person back again, but if they made a mistake, then the sheet was removed, and the person received a silver threepence, made a low obeisance to the judges, and departed without speaking a word. The great fun was of course in trying to deceive the judges. Mary put on Susan's cap, or Ann stooped, to look like Martha. Thomas the light footed shuffled like the hall porter, and William the

strong-lunged wheezed like John the cellarman. When the money was all gone, then the ale, pipes, and tobacco were attacked, and the drink n.r., dancing, and singing was kept up all night long. This strange but jolly custom had been practised ever since the family could afford to buy a brown loaf and stick it over with silver threepences. We sincerely hope that the descendants of this worthy nobleman are all in good health, and in the enjoyment of wealth and happiness.

Our ancestors seem to have been like Messrs. Thurston and Ellis, whom the savages of the South Sea Islands described as "rare boys for their bellies;" meaning, of course, their own uncivilized organs of digestion. Something like a notion of what a tip-top Christmas dinner in the olden time used to be may be gathered from the following lines:—

"Then comes in the second course with great pride,
The cranes, the herons, the bitterns by their side,
The partridge, the pheasant, the woodcock, and the snipe,
Larks in hot slow, for the ladies to pick;
Good drink also, for the ladies to pick;
Blood of Allemagne, romney, and wine.

With hey!

"Good bread and wine, I dare well say.
The host's head, with mustard and vinegar;
Famously for potage, and venison fine;
And the mables of the doe, and all that ever comes in;
Capons well baked, with knuckles of the pie,
Rabbits and currants, and other sycamore too."

With hey!

We never tasted crane, nor heron, nor bitterns, but we should like to, with our usual prostration, we have, as usual, arrived too late for this peculiar dinner. We could forgo the family for potage, and anybody that liked might have our share of doe's mables. They don't sound nice. There is no reason why all the hot larks should be given to the ladies. We know them to be delicious. We allude to both larks and ladies.

And now a glorious and happy Christmas to our readers. It will be a fine day, as bright as a fire, and as warm. May papas feel their hearts melt, and give Christmas-boxes! may mamma find the puddings turn out well, and all the jellies set! may young ladies receive as many offers of marriage as there are berries on the mistletoe, and may their wedded life end as it began, with a kiss! may young gentlemen find their aunts and uncles in a generous disposition! and may the little ones be allowed to stop up all night, and not be ill the next morning!

We will conclude with a verse which we should like everybody to learn by heart—

"Ye who have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother,
In this fast-fading world;
Ye who by word or deed
Have made a kind heart bleed,
Come gather hither!
Let sinners against sinning
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in frier dalia now;
Be links no longer broken;
Be a sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the Holy Bough!"

A. M.

FIVE ACTS.

A STORY THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN TRUE.

I.

THERE is probably no one of those personages who, from what they do, or are supposed to do, are called "public characters," about whose real habits and manner of life so little is known as the dramatic author. It seems to be a traditional fatality, that because the greatest dramatist the world ever saw led a life on which the most erudite and industrious antiquaries and commentators have not been able to throw much more light, beyond the facts that he was born and died at Stratford-on-Avon, and that he wrote those magnificent works that will last to the end of time: it seems to be accepted and settled, that because our Shakespeare's life and almost lineage are enveloped in obscurity and uncertainty, that the dramatist of our own days must remain a mysterious, almost mythical, person—a sort of Thespian "Mrs. Harris," to some, in his individuality, as extinct as the Ibis—to others, as fabulous as the Phoenix. Indeed, many shrewd persons do not believe in the corporeal existence of dramatic authors at all. They imagine such plays as "The Wife's Secret," or the "Lady of Lyons," to be things "got up behind the scenes" by a species of *Fehngericht*, composed of the stage manager, the prompter, the scene-painter, and the call-boy. Those who do recognise as a *fait accompli* that dramatists are living people, who write plays with their own hands, and put the money received for them into their own pockets, entertain two arbitrary hypotheses respecting their habitual appearance in the flesh. According to the first, dramatists are desperately "seedy," careworn, hank-visaged individuals, always clad in cloaks with poodle collars, shrunken tweed trousers, patched highlows, and unpress hats, in which they carry blue cotton pocket-handkerchiefs with white spots, and dogs-eared manuscripts of five-act tragedies. According to the second hypothesis, dramatists are rosy, reckless, jovial "fast-men," who slap managers on the back, drive about in tearing cabs with blood horses, live on the most cayenne-peppery of broiled bones and devilled kidneys, the creamiest of champagne, and the "hoppiest" of pale ale; walk arm-in-arm with captains in the guards, belong to unnumbered clubs, and are the beneficent centres of brilliant constellations of "stars of the ballet," all pink lights and spangles.

I wonder whether either of these hypotheses be true, and if so, which; I wonder, for though "behind the scenes" is a realm familiar to me, and though I ought properly, in my time, to have known dramatists galore, I cannot to this day exactly make out what manner of men they really be, whether they be "fast" men or "slow" men, men who live on their wits, or on the wits, or the want of wits, of others—where they live, how they live, and if they live at all. I have attended the first representations of new pieces, and have seen a personage in evening costume cross the stage, or bow from a private box (the last in a very nervous, shaky, oblique manner, and much resembling the salutation of Mr. Punch from his "public" box). I have seen these gentlemen "come like shadows, and so depart," in response to the call for the "author." I have afterwards supped at the "Albion," and have seen something, in the ruins of evening costume, doubled up in the corner of a box, and too drunk to be disorderly; and have been told by the waiter in a confidential manner, that the grog-soddened carrier there was "Mr. H—, sir; very far gone, sir; yessir," but how was I to know for a certainty that these nebulous appearances were real dramatists? It resolves itself into the old state of doubt into which Archbishop Whately leads us respecting Napoleon Bonaparte. How are we to know that yonder man in the cocked hat and gray coat is the emperor and king and conqueror? I am not very certain about anything myself. There is a person who wears my clothes, sleeps in my bed, eats my dinner, and is good enough to write my works on science and philosophy for me, whom I can't make out at all. To-day, I put him down as the worst of what the Americans term "bad eggs;" to-morrow, I may consider him an ornament to his species. I am sorry to say that the first of these two theories is the one ordinarily indulged in by the acquaintances of the person in question. But dramatic authors puzzle me even more than my —, that is, than that other person. One I know who is considered to be perhaps the most prolific and successful playwright of the day. He does a great deal in the way of adaptations from the French; and yet I have been told that he does not know a word of that language; and that his screaming farces are "put out," like linen for the wash; and come home from the washerwoman starched and mangled at the rate of a pound an act paid to the landress. Fancy such a washing-bill—

One far	£ 1
Three comic ax	3
Five tragick ditter	5
One pure burlesk ditter	2

£11

(The reader will observe that I have made use of the orthodox laundress, or "one pare of sox," orthography). Another dramatist I know who has received more sums in one single year for writing plays (and of the fact of his having done so there can be no reasonable doubt), than many other dramatic authors receive in five, and yet not one of his plays has yet been acted. Another dramatist I have heard of (I am happy to say, that I never had the displeasure of his acquaintance) turned out simply to be a swindler, and was transported accordingly; and another, the writer of a really beautiful sentimental drama, I have discovered lately to be—not an author, but an ass.

So I am not going to cry "Eureka!" because I am about to tell the slightest of "stories" about a dramatic author I might or might not have known—who might or might not have lived at all—whose life-drama might or might not have been enacted here in London, or in the island of Utopia, or in the kingdom of Prester John, or in the "Weissnichtwo" of the Sartor Resartus, or in Fiddler's Green, or in the Land of Nod. But the story

might have been true. That is all I have to say. The rest, my readers, I leave to you. You buy the Christmas Number of the "Illustrated Times," and you take your choice.

Once upon a time—a century, a year, a week ago—there lived (we will say in London), and lived a very hard-up life too, a certain man of the land of Middlesex, called John Ebury—John Ebury, to the editors of his playbills (for he was a dramatist of some renown) and the printers of his books—John Ebury to the police inspectors who made out charge-sheets, and the officers-up of *casus* directing the sheriffs of Middlesex to "take the body of John Ebury wherever he might be found running up and down on his bailiwick, and him safely keep"—to the public, John Ebury, but to public-houses and his friends, plain "Jack." He was one of those men you must call by a familiar diminutive, like "Jack Falstaff," "Tom d'Urey," "Sam Cowell," and "Billy Black." They might just as well have christened John Ebury, Jack; it would have saved trouble. He was, as I have said, a dramatist; but he had been, many years before, a gentleman. The junior son of an exceedingly poor and proud family, he had been educated, and nurtured, and coddled, and *chuffed*, as though he had been heir to a fortune equivalent to Mr. Sam Warren's (another man you must call "Sam," but this time derisively, you know not why) famous Titmouse inheritance; coming of age, he found himself entitled to an income nearly equal in amount to that which is known in nautical parlance as "midshipman's half-pay," which consists, I believe, of "nothing a year, and find yourself." He was sent to Eton, when, with his expectations, or rather non-expectations, St. Giles's parochial schools would have been a century more suitable for him. His unpaid scores for jam-tarts and rum shrub "are extant to this day," as the great historian, Mr. Macaulay, is so fond of telling us, as if anything—the present tense being used—could be extant till yesterday. He was sent to Oxford where he ought to have been sent to earn his living, and where he "made debts" which his parents promised to pay, and didn't, which pursued him through life. After having lost his voice in "holloaing," and singing anthems;—after having seen life, the sight of which comedy very nearly caused him to see that kindred performance—Death; after having gone through almost everything—except the Insolvent Court (he went through that afterwards), he found that his family having never done him anything but harm, were virtuously determined not to do him any good, but sternly to repudiate him: which was done in all the forms in those cases made and provided. Having thus become a "black sheep"—(because nobody had ever washed his fleece for him properly when he was a lamb); being quite full of classical learning, most useful had he been differently circumstanced—quite useless to him placed as he was; being also suffused with expensive ideas and indolent habits—with contempt for those beneath him, and hatred of those above him—he led for some time, with indifferent success, the life of a gentleman upon town. Now, a gentleman with no money and with exhausted credit, is in about the same moral position as the fox in the fable that had lost (the fox, not the fable) his tail, or the ticket-of-leave man of the present day. No one will have anything to do with him. He is an object of continual suspicion. He is mistrusted alike by the society that has cast him off, and the society that won't take him on. People tell him that he ought to be ashamed to beg, and that it is no use his trying to dig, for he can't. "If I were not," says Charles Lamb, "the independent gentleman I am, I would be a beggar." I think myself that the position of a beggar is about eight hundred times preferable to that of a *dependent* gentleman.

II.

An old proverb says that "what is enough for one is enough for two." There is another proverb, certainly as old though not so well known, but far more frequently acted upon, that "what is not enough for one is also enough for two." Following out the instructions of these words of wisdom, Jack Ebury not having enough, or indeed anything for himself, hastened to take unto himself, to wife, a young and beautiful lady whose resources amounted exactly to the sum total of his own. He had nothing; she had nothing; they had nothing. The young lady's family, horrified and indignant that their daughter should espouse a reprobate—poor Jack had never done anything particular, since the first folios of youth, save not to pay because he had no money—availed themselves of the opportunity to repudiate her also; and I daresay that Jack's family and Agnes's family (that was her pretty name) rubbed their hands with much complacency afterwards, and thought they had made rather a good thing of it in getting financially rid of two members of the surplus population. It was believed indeed in polite circles that Agnes's papa—he was a live baronet—would go to heaven—generally, of course, on the score of his baronetcy, but especially on account of his having laid his hand on his waistcoat, and declared that were his daughter starving he would not give her eightpence. Strength of character it was called. Things are called by strange names, to be sure.

The young wife immediately betook herself to the task of bearing children to the lord she loved so well. It would be an exaggeration to say that she loved the ground he walked upon, but she certainly did idolise the coat he wore, and was once caught kissing it. The task of filling her husband's quiver with those little pink-shafted curly-feathered arrows you are aware of, she accomplished with such regularity and rapidity (orders for twins being executed with promptitude and despatch) that, so to speak, before Jack could add to his Christian name the speed-denoting patronymic of Robinson, there had grown around him an astonishing number of small living shoemakers, greengrocers, and bakers' bills. It seemed only yesterday that he was a young man whose family had cast him off; and now he was a middle-aged man, with a family he could not cast off—nor wish to cast off, honest fellow—for he loved all his children dearly, from his dashing eldest daughter (he had in time a daughter who was dashing, and had nothing to dash upon) down to the idiot boy in the corner, who had these epileptic fits, and who cried so bitterly when the brokers were in, and there was no bread.

For, to an abundance of brokers and a paucity of bread Jack had speedily come. It was marvellous to see with what rapidity the gentility, the pride, the ignorance of indigence had been cast to the winds; with what lightning swiftness the young buck, spruce though in debt, fastidious though embarrassed, proud though penniless, had sunk into the shambling, careworn, two-pair back-dwelling, pawnshop-haunting, almost ragged man; with gray hairs in his head, and something very near akin to despair in his heart. Jack Ebury of the club, became Jack Ebury of the bar of the beer-shop in the court; Jack Ebury, who dined at the Trafalgar on whiting-puddings, lobster-balls, devilled whitebait, and Badminton, became Jack Ebury, who brought home fried fish in his coat-pocket to his family, who sent Polly, his second, not to Madame Michan's dancing-academy, or to the Stoke-Pogis Ladies' College, but to Miss Tickletoby's twopenny day-school. Jack Ebury, who had chambers in St. James's (he didn't pay his rent there, it must be acknowledged,) became Jack Ebury who lived in Crooked Court, (which, as all men know, was over against the Royal Roscius Theatre, in Topleton Street,) and didn't pay his rent there. He couldn't pay it at either lodging, but he couldn't pay it more than ever in Crooked Court.

And Mrs. Ebury—Agnes—the live baronet's daughter, who had been "lapped in luxury," with a French governess, a hundred-guinea harp, an Erard's grand—Pappadaggi to teach her singing—a carriage, a saddle-horse—Raffie, A.R.A., to instruct her in drawing—McFistion, R.A., to paint her portrait—Fyddas, the sculptor, to model her bust; a Blenheim spaniel, a jewel-box, a milliner's bill, and a cherry-coloured flunkey (I allude to the plush,) specially affected to her service. What did Mrs. Ebury do? This: She washed her children's clothes. I think, would Jack have allowed her to do it, she would have taken in "families' washing" into the bargain, or have had a mangle on the ground-floor of Crooked Court. I am sure Jack would have turned it for her. She scrubbed; she darned; she mended Jack's clothes; she persuaded him to take long walks, and come home late to dinner, because there was enough food for the children and for him, and not enough for her, and she could tell him that she had dined early. This brave woman was ashamed and afraid of nothing save dishonesty. She was ashamed neither of the pawnshops frequented by the family, nor of the mean rooms they inhabited, nor of the bare floors, nor of the fried fish, nor of the patched and faded garments she went in, nor of poverty, nor of contempt, nor of meeting those who had known her in prosperity. She wept sometimes to

think her husband was no longer the gallant, sprightly, handsome man she had known him once; she wept to see her children go to school, little ragamuffins than little gentlemen and ladies. But, on her knees, never wept, never repined, as she never either faltered, or broke (Jack regretted the state of life into which it had phased heaven forbid). When such women as these die, there are no Ben Jansons to write epitaphs over them as over "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother, and that, when Death strikes another fair and wife and good as I am, I shall throw a dart of them." They die, and are forgotten, or are remembered as women good enough, but devoid of proper pride.

III.

You will ask me how, even in this life of Crooked Court, Jack Ebury managed to keep out of the workhouse. I will tell you. There is a profession, or trade, or calling, or mode of money-getting, which no previous training, apprenticeship, or preparation is necessary to a state into which men fall—they do not assume it, they are put into it by accident. It is open to all. The bankrupt's clerk, the discarded unjust counting-house clerk, the insolvent horse-dealer, the cashiered captain, the "sticker stabler," the unsuccessful actor, "plucked" medical student, the expelled under-graduate—all are welcomed with open arms. It is a profession of which one of our brilliant professors said, seventy years ago, that were he to see a true brother, or a dear friend, looking to it as a means of livelihood, he would sooner see him sweeping the streets than devoting himself to a career that must inevitably end in wailing and gnashing of teeth, and irretrievable despair. This profession is called Literature, and Jack Ebury took kindly. He "turned author." Men "turn" this profession—they not "become" authors, they "turn" so.

He had a quick wit, a ready imagination, a considerable amount of life, and some learning, and he soon found employment. He about this time that he began to be called "Unlucky Jack Ebury," committed, at the outset of his career, the fatal error of identifying himself with the "dignity of literature" to write for newspapers, having contemptuously refused some offers of an introduction to the realms of journalism, he found afterwards, when his proud stomach had been brought down, and he had supplanted himself on the "mean" recommended by "Mr. E's aunt" to Arthur Clennam, that other Jack before him through the gate of Horn of the newspaper office, and that he no use his knocking at *that* door. So he betook himself to the literary bookwork. There are three degrees in the royal arch of letters. The colossal novelist, who earns his thousands; that of the journalist, with a good book in his leisure hours, and enjoys his hundreds; and of the miserable hack. "Unlucky Jack Ebury" "went in" (for you see yourself, and are not elected) for the third degree. He speedily found the level of Ned Fardon, who, according to Goldsmith, "once was a seller's hack," and led such a horrible—Oliver's adjective is stronger—in this world, that he didn't think he'd wish to come back. And the degree accounts for Crooked Court, the wash-tub, the pawnshop, and the fried fish.

Jack, I have said, was a loving husband. He was a faithful one, as times went, a steady one. But he was a "muddler." He didn't tipsey once in three months; but when he did it, was always where somebody could see him, and always when the last and most important part of a work was being anxiously expected by the bookseller. He muddled away his time, his temper, his money, his energies, his opportunities everything. He was as one who has been born an hour too soon, and, as a tired sleeper disturbed too early, goes drowsy through life.

When Jack's head was getting seriously gray, and his back unacceptably bent—he had not turned the corner of forty yet—he was advised by a friend who couldn't write himself, but made a handsome income by saying that he did, to "try his luck on the stage"—in other words, to become a dramatic author. After some nine months' hesitation, something like resolution was born in Jack's mind, and he wrote a farce. After much waiting about at stage-doors, and pestering managers, and deferring of hope that made his heart very sick, Jack's farce was not only read but accepted—not only accepted but produced; and more than all this, it achieved very considerable success. Jack wrote another, and another, and a good many more—some original, some translations—and for different theatres. They were subject to the usual averages of theatrical successes. Some of the worst became popular favourites, and some of the best were damned. He got some fame, and a little money, by these opuscles—and the first he muddled away, as he did the last.

Said the friend who couldn't write, but said he did (his name was Pruffe)—

"Jack, here's a chance for you. Loggie wants to open the R. R. for the winter season with a five-act comedy. Why the deuce don't you go in and win—(a familiar man was Pruffe)—and I can tell you in confidence that Loggie is ready, nay eager, to take anything you like to send him. You have four months to do it in; now, why don't you do it?"

"I will do it," cried Unlucky Jack Ebury, striking the crazy table in Crooked Court, on which Jack's youngest was drumming with a knife and fork, hopefully expectant of a mid-day meal, which did not always make its appearance at that summons.

"You won't," said Mr. Pruffe, wagging his head, half doubtfully, half interrogatively.

"See if I don't," retorted the other sternly and resolutely.

And this was all that passed between the friends.

IV.

Now the R. R. was the Royal Roscius Theatre, which, as you have already heard, was situated in Topleton Street; and the grand entrance was exactly opposite to Crooked Court, at whose left-hand corner house—once second-floor back, now (since the farces) first-floor front—lived Jack Ebury and his teeming family. This gigantic establishment, sanctified by the memories of the Rosciuses (the original Rosciuses played a starring engagement at the R. R. during the Roman occupation of Britain), the Barbages, the Bettertons, the Garricks, the Cookes, the Keans, and the Kembles—and, it must be added, *sub rosa*, of a few wild-beast shows, Bayadère troops, Ethiopian sercnaders, and Bedouin contortionists, was now (I speak, of course, of "now" as "then") in the occupancy of the renowned Mr. Loggie. Loggie had been most things in his life—even an author; but his unmistakable vocation was to be a manager, and a manager he had become. If truth must be told, he had himself exhibited the wild-beasts and the contortionists (he was guiltless of Bayadères) at the R. R.; but he had set his mind on legitimacy, and last—"the fine old British comedy, sir," and his zoological and anatomical byegones were allowed to be byegones. Jack Ebury going over to see Loggie, found that *impresario* not indisposed to treat with him. Of course, Unlucky Jack owed Loggie money (for he had had dealings with him before). He owed everybody money. He was a man who if anybody owed him twenty pounds, would owe that somebody forty before he had himself received the twenty. He was a muddler. But in this case, he most unaccountably refrained from muddling. He made a bargain with Loggie, by which he was to receive a certain sum of money—an enormous one for him—for the five-act comedy whose plot he had ready, and which, shown to Loggie, was by him approved. A portion of this sum was to be paid to him on account; another, and by far the largest portion, he was to receive after the piece had "run" a certain number of nights. Loggie was a hard man, but a just one; and Ebury knew that if he once made a bargain he would abide by it.

The most unaccountable thing was, that Jack Ebury, going mad and fast, and with a grim resolution to work, actually wrote the comedy from act the first, scene the first, to act the fifth, scene the last, without drawing rein. The next, that being read before the company, it was universally commended (the universe being supposed to consist of the ladies and gentlemen congregated within the four walls of the green-room) as a good play, a sound play, a play full of wit and action, and "telling points." The last, that having been rehearsed, announced in advertisement, poster, and newspaper paragraph, affairs came to this point, that one dusky November evening, in the year of G. C. (which may be taken to mean *Green's Calendar*, precisely as the reader pleases), there was a snowstorm of playbills about the Royal Roscius Theatre, and on these playbills the detailed title and *dramatis personae* of a certain new comedy, which, with new

enery, dress, and decorations, was to be produced for the first time that night. Jack had his chance at last, and well he deserved it.

V.

He came home to Crooked Court to dinner that day about five o'clock, tired and harassed, but cheerful and hopeful, having been since ten that morning at the last rehearsal of the piece. All had gone smoothly. Loggins was in first-rate spirits, and, shaking hands warmly with Jack, had predicted a brilliant and lasting success for the piece, and had positively given him a five pound note over and above what he was entitled to draw on account. "And there's two hundred more to come, my pe," said Jack gleefully, dutifully handing Mr. Ferriday's beneficent autograph to his wife.

Jack had his dinner, and said he thought half-a-pint of sherry would do him no harm, as he felt a good deal exhausted. So, half-a-pint of sherry was tumbled from the sign of the "Wipperkin Pimperkin," at the top of Crooked Court; and the worthy landlord, Mr. Thumbpiece, who had been in the theatrical line himself, and had enacted second-class robbers with great success at the most celebrated provincial theatres, told little Jessie, Jack's third, that he "made bold to wish him luck and plenty of it, for he was a real gentleman, every inch of him, as never denied his 'shots,' though he did let them run a long time for sure—" This last portion of his address being more paranthetical and addressed to Mrs. Thumbpiece in the bar-parlour than to Jessie.

Jack Ebury drank his sherry, and drank his wife's health first, and then, laughingly, Loggie's. It is then on record that he cried a little, but not sadly, and being a soft-hearted man, kissed his children all round, who for their parts were so fond of him that they would have accepted kisses as a composition in full for bread and butter any day. Then putting his arm round his wife's waist, he drew her to the window, and they fell to speculating as to the sort of audience there would be over the way, whether the gallery would be noisy or quiet, and whether all the great morning newspaper critics would be there. The good soul, his wife, had laid out carefully Jack's only suit of evening black, and had gone patiently over it button by button, seam by seam, to see that all was in it and proper order. These black pantaloons were certainly wofully threadbare; but the gas, Jack said, would cover a multitude of sins.

It was now six o'clock and quite dark. There was a considerable gathering round the pit door already (the gallery entrance was in another street), and the playbill sellers were busily plying their vocation. Even the ham sandwich man, accompanied by the merchant who dealt (and deals) in pigs' trotters, had already arrived, not with any hopes of selling, but to reconnoitre the ground, anticipating a famous draw on the first night of a new season and a new comedy.

"What a noble old structure it is," said Jack, eyeing the great Royal Roscius Theatre admiringly from the window. Were not the FIVE ACTS of his comedy inside that noble structure?

"Yes, dear, it is," Mrs. Ebury said, thinking doubtless of the five acts too; "but isn't it nearly time for you to dress, Jack?" (She always called him Jack. Everybody called him Jack, save the sheriff of Middlesex, and people of that ilk.)

"A moment, a moment, little wife of mine," cried Jack. "Dear Agnes," he continued, "you don't know how happy I feel, how grateful I feel to you for all the love and goodness and forbearance that for long years you have never withheld from me, no, not for one single moment."

He kissed his wife, and she him, and he went on.

"Do you know, Agnes, that I have a perfect confidence of success to-night; of a glorious success? I have quite a presentiment. Look how many years I have been waiting for a chance. At last I have it."

He had his back to the window, now, holding her round the waist, she resting her head on his shoulder, fondly.

"I must succeed now," he continued, not boastfully, but as a man who has been resigned to a misfortune for years now and then vindicate his modesty. "I must get on—there is nothing to stop me now."

"Nothing," said his wife, gladly. "Nothing," she said again, fondly—"Nothing!" she cried out in an awful voice, as if some one had pierced her heart with a dagger, "nothing—but, oh my God—the FIRE!"

Suddenly the room turned red, and the black shadows of husband and wife were cast on to the ceiling. Suddenly, from the windows of the great theatre opposite, there leapt out tongues of flame, as from the mouths of cannon in the portholes of a ship of war. Then a great black cloud began to overhang the street, and soon myriads of lurid sparks began to dance in it like devils. Then there was a clattering of fast-tearing engines, and far-off echoed shrieks of "fire;" and a crowd of thousands of people starting up, from Heaven knows where, raising their red-hot reflected faces to see the theatre burn. Then the engines began to clank, and the police to fight furiously with the mob, and the mob to yell; and in all the newspapers of the ensuing morning there was, instead of a glowing criticism on Unlucky Jack Ebury's new comedy, a lucid, though homely, report, by Jack Toddlint, the penny-a-linner, of "The total destruction by fire, of the Royal Roscius Theatre, Toppleton Street."

What became of Unlucky Jack Ebury? What does it matter? Did he cast himself from the window, die of a broken heart, or set to work again and write another five-act comedy for another theatre that was not burnt down? What does it matter? What is all this but an idle fancy that came over me many months since, as I wandered among the smouldering ruins of Covent Garden Theatre? G. A. S.

CHARADE.

AFTER THE MANNER OF THE LATE THOMAS INGOLDSBY.

I CAME to London last July, a yoked I confess; I met a little vulgar boy—he begged for an address. I knew not how the man's address he asked, to him could matter, The personage in question was no other than my latter.

But still I told that vulgar boy where I had bought my hat, He threw a vulgar summersault, and shouted "What a flat!" He on my collars splashed the mud in which he was immersed, I told that little vulgar boy he really was my first.

He questioned me about a theft, of which I'd never heard, He ask'd "Who stole the donkey?" I inform'd him 'twas absurd, To think a country gentleman who seldom set his foot, My second, could reply to such a question as he put.

Again he threw a summersault, again he called me flat, Then courteously inform'd me, 'twas the man with the white hat. I knew not who such man might be, nor what the child could mean, ('Twas odd the hat I wore was white, turned up inside with green).

He roll'd before me like a wheel, and fairly scared my wits; He stood upon his hand, and almost frightened me to fits. I bade him stand the right side up—he asked me with a shout, A question strange—'twas if my mother knew that I was out?

He frightened me, that vulgar child—of elfish face and limb, Suppose my mother knew or not, what mattered to him? I bade him mind his own affairs. He ran before me still Upon his hands, and whirl'd his legs about him like a mill.

I asked that vulgar child, what made him act in such a manner? He said he meant to do so till I handed him a "tanner." I said that, of that calling, none in London town I knew. He laughed again, and told me that a "Joey," then, would do.

I told him, I had no such thing—whatever that might be, And asked him why, with such my whole, he persecuted me? He leapt and rolled, and whisk'd and whirl'd, with active arm and leg, And finally inform'd me, he would spare me for a "meg."

I bade him go and purchase one, and threw him half-a-crown. To see the greed with which he pounced upon the silver down! He disappeared—I saw not where—there are no sprites, they say; I won't be sure: that vulgar boy upset me for the day.

THE DEATH GRASP.

A TALE TO BE READ ROUND THE CHRISTMAS FIRE.

I.

THROUGHOUT the whole length and breadth of England, there are but very few human habitations, from the magnificent palace of the sovereign down to the wretched hut of the peasant, where the inmates do not anxiously look forward to Christmas. It is a season of rejoicing for young and old, rich and poor; a season when friendships are strengthened and injuries forgotten; a season when people open not only their houses but their hearts; a season, in a word, when even the most sceptical and misanthropical cannot fail to perceive the threads of kindness, gentleness, charity and faith, running through the dark woof of life, just as the glorious gold border, which we have all so much admired and coveted as boys, was interwoven in every piece of muslin, however coarse, that our mothers' fingers ever transformed into gowns, caps, or habitshirts.

One of the few places, to our knowledge, where an exception is to be found to the general mirth and rejoicing that characterise Christmas, is Coldbrook Hall, in the little village of Fulford-le-Hope, on the coast of Essex. Christmas is there a time of gloom and de-olation. A week before Christmas Day the family leave the old building, to which they do not return for ten days or a fortnight. During their absence, it is completely uninhabited; not a single person is left behind, and while sounds of merriment and joviality are heard in every house, and bright lights stream from almost every window in the village, no human footfall is heard, no human voice echoes, beneath the roof of Coldbrook Hall. Those, however, who are sufficiently curious and daring to approach the ancient pile during the period its masters have deserted it, may see and hear strange things. Such, at least, is the belief of all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood for miles around, not one of whom is ignorant of the legend of the Death-Grasp.

During a short stay we made, last summer, at Fulford-le-Hope, we heard this legend from Mr. Massey, the civil and obliging landlord of the Coldbrook Arms, an excellent inn, which we recommend to such of our readers as may chance to visit the village. Mr. Massey, like his forefathers for now more than two centuries, was formerly in the service of the Arnells, who are the possessors of Coldbrook Hall, and related to the family of the same name in Devonshire. It was from him that we learned the reasons which induce the family periodically to abandon their ancestral seat in the manner we have mentioned. The following is, in all essential points, the purport of his story.

II.

On Christmas Eve, 1630, the only members of the family then stopping at Coldbrook Hall were Hugh Arnell and his cousin, Margaret Brill, a rich young heiress. Her father and mother being dead, she had been confided to the guardianship of her uncle, Sir Marmaduke Arnell. The latter, together with his wife and second son, Thomas, had gone to spend their Christmas in London. Hugh had also been invited, but, on some pretext or other, had refused the invitation. Margaret, too, had not gone, on account of ill-health.

About seven o'clock on the evening in question, Hugh Arnell was in the library, a large and lofty apartment, three sides of which were occupied by shelves filled with books. On the fourth side were six windows reaching down to the floor. They were now concealed by heavy crimson curtains. Two massive silver candelabra, with wax tapers, spread a strong light for a circumscribed space around the table, drawn up near the huge fireplace, inside which half a dozen persons, at least, might have seated themselves with ease. So vast, however, were the proportions of the apartment, that the light, strong and brilliant though it was, could not entirely illuminate it, and its further extremities were veiled in a kind of half-obscurity. On the hearth blazed an immense wood fire, to which Hugh Arnell kept adding log after log, until the heat became almost unbearable, despite the snow and frost without. He threw on, also, large pieces of some other substance than wood, which curled up, and spluttered in the hot ashes, emitting, at the same time, a faint and smouldering odour. While he was thus engaged, a knock was heard at the door at the opposite end of the room.

"Who is there?" he exclaimed, suddenly turning round and shutting the lid of a strong oak chest placed between the table and the windows. "Who is there?"

"It is I, Margaret," replied a voice outside.

"What do you want? I am reading; I am busy," he answered, going towards the door, which was secured by a heavy bolt.

"I would speak to you on something of the greatest importance; I entreat you to let me enter," said Margaret.

"Impossible," returned Hugh, glancing round to the fireplace, and then examining the ponderous bolt. What was his surprise to see the bolt shoot back, apparently of its own accord, for only those who might be inside the room could gain access to it, and he himself, the only person there, had not touched it. He staggered back a few paces with an air of astonishment and incredulity; the door opened, and Margaret entered.

Margaret Brill was a young and beautiful creature, of about two-and-twenty. She was tall and somewhat slim, but eminently graceful in every gesture and every movement. The outline of her face formed a perfect oval, lighted up by a pair of lustrous black eyes. At the moment of her entering the apartment, they beamed with more than usual brilliancy; while her long, glossy-black hair, unconfined by comb or band, streamed over her shoulders. She was dressed in a loose white wrapper—not whiter, however, than her face, which more resembled that of a corpse than of a human being.

"What do you require?" stammered forth Hugh. "What is it, Margaret? You are ill, darling. You are deadly pale."

Paying no attention to what he said, Margaret slowly advanced towards the table, Hugh retreating before her, and seemingly incapable of arresting her progress, however much he might feel inclined to do so. She put down on the table the light she was carrying in her hand, and then said—

"I have come to ask you concerning Edward Noris."

"Edward Noris," repeated Hugh.

"Ay, Edward Noris. It is strange that I should come on such an errand, is it not? Stranger still is the reason of my doing so. You are his rival. You would fain be my husband. Your father, my uncle and guardian, also wishes me to become your wife. Perhaps he would not be sorry to see you master of the large estates I have inherited, and which he still holds, although I have now been of age a year and more. He has said a thousand times that I shall never wed Edward Noris. I am kept here a close prisoner, to prevent my doing so. I saw no means of escaping from this tyranny until three days ago."

"Three days ago," repeated Hugh, with an involuntary shudder, which he in vain endeavoured to suppress.

"Yes, three days ago. About this hour, as I was sitting alone, a sort of indescribable, light-blue vapour, seemed to fill my chamber. It continued to grow thicker and thicker, until at last it entered my body through every pore, and pervaded my entire being. I then felt an irresistible impulse, penetrating and filling the inmost recesses of my soul."

"Why, Margaret, what childish nonsense is this? You must surely have been dreaming!" exclaimed her companion with a laugh, which, however, was belied by a nervous twitching at the corners of his mouth.

"I was not dreaming, Hugh Arnell," returned Margaret, "any more than I am at the present moment. I still feel the same impulse that I did then; and, moreover, a firm and steadfast conviction that what I yearn for will be granted."

"What is it, Margaret?" asked Hugh. "Perhaps it is no such important matter after all."

"I have come to beg that you will take me to Edward—nay, do not interrupt me—that you will cease your useless addresses, and give up your pretensions to my hand."

"Take you to Edward! Margaret, you are abusing my good nature, or ridiculing me. Such a thing is impossible," replied her companion.

"Do not say so, for I know you are wrong. As surely as I now address you, shall I pass Christmas Day with Edward Noris, and you are the person by whose means I shall do so!"

"This is absurd. Such a thing cannot be!" answered Hugh.

"Cannot be!" exclaimed Margaret. "Why can it not be? After what I have told you, you could never think of wedding me—or," she continued, in a solemn tone, "is he dead?"

For a moment, Hugh was completely overwhelmed by her question, and the strange, peculiar manner in which it was put. At length, however, he was about to make some reply, when she interrupted him.

"Hush!" she exclaimed, "hush! hush! not a word!"

Her whole appearance was changed. Her face grew even paler than before, and her slim frame quivered like a leaf. By degrees she became calmer and calmer, till she resembled a statue carved in stone. With fixed glance, and body half leaning forwards, as if listening to some one, she stood silent and motionless for a considerable time.

During several minutes did Hugh remain looking at her, as if he had been rooted to where he stood. At last he broke silence.

"In Heaven's name, explain this strange behaviour!" he said.

"Hush!" she answered; adding, after a short pause, "did you not hear it?"

"What? hear what?" he inquired eagerly.

"You did not hear it, then? Listen while I tell you," replied Margaret, in a calm, death-like voice. "Yes, I will tell you; though he spoke plainly enough."

"He! who?" asked her companion.

"Edward," she answered.

"When?" inquired Hugh.

"This instant," she replied.

"Where?"

"Here!"

"This is utter madness!" exclaimed Hugh; but his haggard look proved that he was more affected by his companion's words than he cared to avow.

Margaret continued, without heeding him—

"When you were in London, whence you returned only this evening, you met Edward. Your plan was instantly taken. He spoke to you frankly, and like a gallant gentleman. He told you that you must give up your pretensions to me, or meet him, sword in hand, to support them, for he was determined to deliver me from the degrading state of dependence in which I was so unjustly kept. You replied, that you loved me far too much ever to censure the slightest sorrow, and that, therefore, you would no longer oppose his suit. You begged him to say nothing of your interview, not even to mention that you had seen him, until you could arrange matters, and obtain your father's consent to your abandoning your attentions to myself. You added, that you were willing to forget all past differences; and ended by inviting him to come and see you the next evening at the inn where you were stopping, in the Borough. Deceived by your apparent sincerity and frankness, he consented. You went home, but you took with you a heavy chest, which you told the porters who carried it was filled with books. It contained stones, not books. Those stones you carried off, and threw away during that night and the next day. Your guest arrived at the appointed hour, three nights ago. You received him with hypocritical cordiality, and promised that he should pass the Christmas Day with me."

"Enough of this! Your words are raving madness; I will listen to you no more!" exclaimed Hugh; but he did not move from the spot where he stood, as though spell-bound.

"That promise you will keep. I am sure of it, as I have already told you," continued Margaret, in a low, cold voice, which froze the marrow in his bones.

"I made no such promise; I never saw him," said he, with a look of agony.

"You rose from your chair as if to reach a glass," Margaret went on to observe, calm and unmoved, and apparently without hearing him; "and, as he was in the act of drinking, you bound your scarf, which you had ready, round his throat. The next day you gave out that you were ill, and did not rise, but lay with the body of your victim beneath your bed. In the evening, you placed the body in the chest you had prepared, and which you sent down here yesterday. Your measures were well taken; your victim made no noise, and was not missed, for no one saw him enter."

Margaret paused, still as if listening to some one whispering into her ear. Hugh stood with his gaze fixed on her, and the large drops of sweat falling from his forehead. He made several attempts to speak, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. At last, he suddenly drew himself up with a sudden effort, and muttered in a husky tone—

"Were any one but yourself to accuse me of such a crime, I"—

He did not complete his sentence, for Margaret interrupted him. While relating her horrible tale, she had been in a sort of dream, and spoke as one inspired. She now seemed to be suddenly restored to consciousness. Her cheeks flushed a hectic red, her eyes dilated, and her breast heaved violently. As she heard his last words, she exclaimed,—

"A crime! what crime? Hugh Arnell, what crime?"

"Your brain is disordered, Margaret," he replied.

"Ay," she continued, "it is! I have had a dreadful—a horrible dream. I dreamed—but no!" she added, with a piercing shriek, which sounded like nothing human, as her eyes fell upon the oak chest. "No! it was not a dream! it was the truth, revealed by the help of Heaven itself! Hugh Arnell, you know it was the truth!"

So speaking, she ran to the chest, and, throwing back the lid, exposed to view the mangled remains of a human corpse.

"There! there! Hugh Arnell," she shrieked hysterically; "what say you now? And yonder, among those glowing logs, what is that? What were you burning when I interrupted you? Your victim's body!"

It is impossible to describe by mere words the appearance of Hugh. His agitation was frightful. His colour came and went with inconceivable rapidity. One instant he was ashy pale, and the next a deep crimson, while waves of tremulousness rolled, as it were, through his whole frame. His legs tottered beneath him, but he managed to reel up to where Margaret stood.

"Murderer!" exclaimed the latter. "Murderer!"

"For Heaven's sake, silence!" he said.

"Are you not the murderer of Edward Noris?—your guest—my fond, devoted lover?"

"Margaret! if I am," replied her companion, falling on his knees before her, "have pity on me! forgive me! It was love for you which urged me on. Forgive me; it was for your sake I did it!"

"He appeals to me," said Margaret, "to me, the destined bride of his victim. Murderer, murderer! Help, help!"

"Silence!" he exclaimed, "silence! you will raise the household."

"I would, I will," she replied, making towards the door.

"Stop, Margaret," he said, holding her back. "Stop, and reflect what you are about to do. You would consign me to a scaffold."

"What other resting-place is there so fit for so base and dastardly a murderer?" she answered, struggling to escape.

Hugh's danger was now most imminent. If she eluded him, he felt certain of his fate; the intensity of his agony lent him courage.

"If you persist," he resumed, in a low, but ominous voice, "your life or mine will be the forfeit. Keep this secret, and I promise to leave the house, the country, and never to see you more."

"No—no—no!" cried the young creature, wrestling with him; "no—never! Help, help!"

"You will have it," said Hugh, between his clinched teeth, and, snatching up the knife he had already been using in the previous part of the evening, and which was lying on the table, he struck at her with his full force. The handle emitted a dull, muffled sound as it came against her body. A small red speck instantly appeared upon her white dress, growing every instant larger and larger, until Hugh withdrew the knife, when the blood bubbled and entirely overpread the dress.

"I told you I was sure I should pass my Christmas Day with him, and by your means," she ejaculated as she fell back, with a smile on her lips. "See, see, he is with me now. Murderer! I am beyond your power—but—you—you are not—you never will be—you or yours—be-yond—his."

These were the last words she ever spoke. Her eyes became glazed over with a sort of film; her breathing grew shorter and more difficult, and she sank back upon the oaken floor—dead!

III.

Hugh Arnell felt his brain whirl round with a thousand conflicting emotions, but the idea of self-preservation was indistinctly and unconsciously

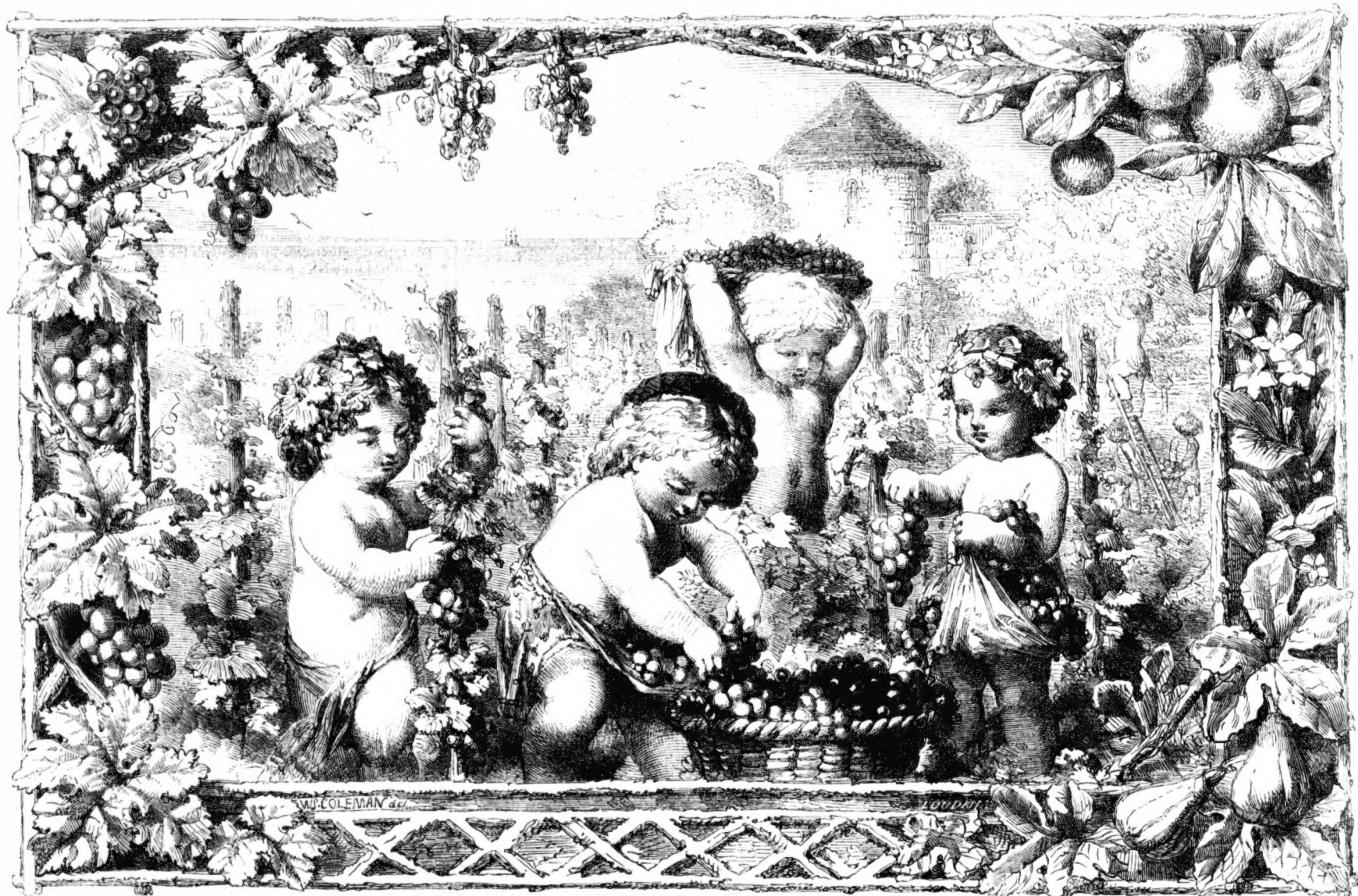


THE FARM AND POULTRY YARD AT CHRISTMAS TIME.—(DRAWN BY W. S. COLEMAN.)

predominant. He was a murderer for the second time, he scarcely knew how. He had but a confused recollection of the causes which had led him to perpetrate this fresh crime. All his faculties were concentrated in the one great fact, that it was necessary for him to dispose, in some way or other, of his victim, in order that the murder might not be discovered. He leaned down for the purpose of raising the body, but found that, slim and

light as it was, he could not do so. Not that it appeared too heavy for him, but there seemed some power at work opposed to his own, and which held down the corpse in the position it occupied. Again and again he endeavoured to carry out his intention, and each successive time did he fail. He imagined, doubtless, that his physical strength had deserted him, and determined to test the point, for he rose and proceeded to the oak chest.

Grasping it firmly with both hands at either end, and, straining every muscle to the utmost, he raised it, heavy as it was, with ease. Again he went up to the body, and renewed his attempt. Again was he unsuccessful. All at once his glance alighted upon the hands, which seemed to be firmly retained, as in a vice. He examined them more closely. When he touched them, they could be moved about freely enough in all directions



GATHERING CHRISTMAS FRUITS.—(DRAWN BY W. S. COLEMAN.)



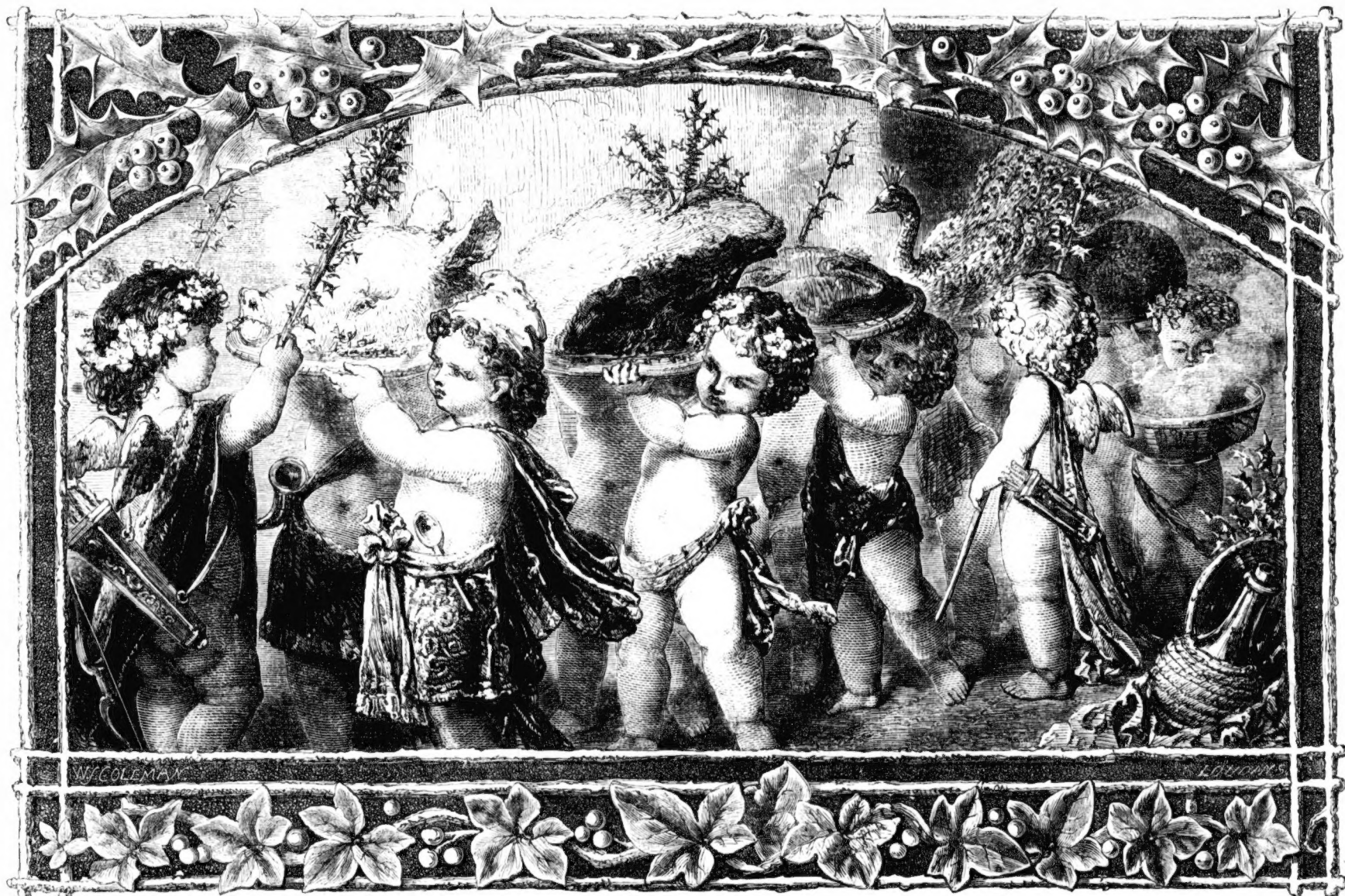
PREPARING THE CHRISTMAS BANQUET.—(DRAWN BY W. S. COLEMAN.)

but, immediately he tried to lift the body, they once more were tightly grasped. Staggered, bewildered, and half-unconscious of what he was doing, he rolled back the sleeve from one of the arms. Round the wrist he distinctly beheld the impression of the fingers and thumb of what appeared to have been a human hand. Uncovering the other wrist, he perceived there, likewise, the same bluish marks, corresponding to four fin-

gers and a thumb. He was looking carefully, first at one arm and then at the other, when he was startled by the noise of something moving on the hearth. He turned round, as quick as thought itself. The fire had gone down considerably, and an immense blood-hound was scraping with its paw among the outer edge of ashes. It had just dragged forth a large bone, with some scorched shreds of flesh still adhering to it.

"Ah! Nero! Nero, sir!" exclaimed Hugh, advancing to the hound. But the latter, although a favourite, and also generally fond of its master, avoided him, and ran, still carrying its horrible booty in its mouth, out of the library.

Hugh now perceived, for the first time, that the door had been left open ever since Margaret had entered. He hastily rushed up and bolted



BRINGING IN THE CHRISTMAS DISHES.—(DRAWN BY W. S. COLEMAN.)

it. He lingered for some minutes at the extremity of the apartment, evidently unwilling to return near his cousin's corpse. He passed and repassed his hand frequently over his brow with anxious hesitation. At last, however, he walked straight up to the spot, knelt down on one knee, and, putting his arm under the waist, was about to make another effort to lift the body, when he suddenly let it slip from his hold. His hair rose perceptibly on his head with horror. His eye-balls were blood-shot, and so distended that they seemed about to start from their sockets. His lower jaw dropped, and his whole bearing and demeanour indicated the most abject and terrible state of fear. His glances were fixedly directed towards two bright spots, like stars, piercing the misty gloom in which the extremity of the library was shrouded. Those two spots were two human eyes glaring at him with such intensity that they almost appeared to touch him, and transfix him like two sharp daggers. His agony at that moment must have been terrible. He had not been alone with his victim when performing the work of murder! Every word spoken had been heard, every blow dealt had been seen by a third person, for now, despite of the obscurity, he could make out the form of a man, a sort of sailor, standing in a recess, generally concealed by a curtain, behind which, no doubt, the man had hitherto been hid.

The stranger advanced a step or two. Still Hugh did not move. He saw nothing, cared for nothing, but those two eyes, which glared at him with supernatural brilliancy through the gloom, and which curdled his blood. The stranger continued to advance until opposite Hugh. With his eyes still fixed upon the latter, he said, pointing first to the oak chest, and then to Margaret's lifeless form—

"Murderer! Murderer!"

Hugh shuddered, but could not move. The two eyes were glaring upon him, eating, like live coals, into his soul. No sooner, however, were they withdrawn for an instant, to look on Margaret, than, gathering himself up, for a supreme effort, he bounded like a tiger at the stranger's throat, exclaiming, as he did so—

"Help! murder! Help, there!"

The stranger instantly divined his assailant's intention. It was evident that Hugh had resolved to shift suspicion and the consequences of his crime, from his own shoulders to those of a man perfectly innocent of it, and who, in fact, was the only witness against him. The idea, though devilish in the extreme, was admirably calculated to serve the assassin's purpose; for who would, for a single moment, believe the statement of a plain, sea-faring man, such as the stranger, judging by his exterior, was, when opposed to the oath of a gentleman of family, and the heir to immense estates? All these considerations, and a thousand others, flashed with the rapidity of lightning through the stranger's mind as he grappled with Hugh, who held him firmly, while he continued his cries for assistance. No time was to be lost. The cries had aroused the household, for the sound of men's feet rapidly mounting the stairs was heard approaching nearer and nearer; at last they stopped outside the library.

"Break open the door!" gasped forth Hugh. "Break open the door! there is murder going forward!"

There was now the sound of persons running down stairs. Presently they returned, and heavy blows, dealt with a sledge hammer, or some other ponderous instrument, echoed against the door. But the latter was formed of massive oak, and defied the efforts made by those outside to force it. But no obstacle, however strong, could possibly hold out long against such violence. The stranger clearly felt convinced of this, and the conviction strung his nerves up to the highest pitch. He had, for a minute or two, opposed Hugh more feebly, and the latter had nearly succeeded in dragging him up to the door, which he might then have opened. But the stranger had merely done so to recruit his well-nigh exhausted strength. Just as his adversary's hand was within an inch of the bolt, he gathered himself up, pressed his lips closely together, and catching Hugh by the collar of his tight-fitting doublet, hurled him with a giant's force across the room.

Hugh fell heavily against the bookcase, and remained for the moment insensible. Casting an anxious look around him, the stranger sought some outlet by which to flee. His eye lighted upon the curtains before the window nearest to him. Running up, he drew them hastily on one side, and, opening the lattice, looked out. The distance to the ground was about thirty feet. The stranger involuntarily drew back. As this instant, the door gave way with a frightful crash, fragments of it being projected completely across the room. Hesitation was tantamount to death. The stranger swung himself over the sill, but remained still hanging by his hands, which convulsively clutched it. He was endeavouring to find a resting place for his foot on the trellis work against the wall.

"Yonder he is!" exclaimed Hugh, rising from the place to which he had been hurled. "Yonder—at the window! Pursue him! Capture him! He is the murderer of my cousin!"

The servants darted to the window. The two hands were still clinging spasmodically to the sill, every vein in them standing out in relief like whip cord. One of the servants drew his sword across them. The blood spurted up into the air, and a heavy fall was heard on the ground beneath. "He is wounded!" cried Hugh. "Quick, quick, follow me! He cannot escape."

So speaking, and accompanied by his retainers, he descended the stairs, and ran with furious haste out of the house, in time to see, in the moonlight, the stranger retreating at full speed across the park. They instantly followed, and were rapidly gaining upon him, when the object of their chase reached the transparent brook from which the hall takes its name.

"He is ours! he is ours!" exclaimed Hugh! "He has missed the bridge!"

But Hugh Arnell was mistaken. Looking once behind him, the stranger dashed into the water. His pursuers were so near him that they could hear the thin coating of ice on the brook break as he plunged in.

"Fire on him, fire on him!" cried Hugh, in a voice hoarse with excitement and rage. "Fire on him, fire on him!"

Three or four shots responded to this order, but they missed their intended victim. By the time Hugh and his followers had arrived at the bank, the stranger was far on the other side and soon lost to view.

Although they did not give up the pursuit, it was useless. They proceeded to the village, and continued their search the entire night, aided by the blood-hound Nero, but in vain. From the moment the stranger had reached the highway every trace of him was lost. He had run along the middle of the road, and his footsteps were no longer distinguishable. The hound, too, was at fault. An active search was kept up for several days, but with the same result, and the general impression was, that the supposed murderer had escaped in one of the numerous smuggling vessels hovering about the coast. This impression was the more likely to be correct, as it was at the sea-shore that the blood-hound had lost the scent.

Hugh Arnell's account of the murder was to the following effect. On his return from London, and after having remained in the library a short time, he had proceeded to his bed-chamber for the purpose of changing his riding-dress. He had just done so, when he heard screams issuing from the library. He rushed down to see what they meant. Immediately he entered the apartment, the door was closed and bolted behind him, and he found himself in the presence of his cousin and her murderer. How he gave the alarm and pursued his intended victim, we know.

This story gained implicit belief. Hugh escaped even the shadow of suspicion, but people remarked a change in his behaviour. He was depressed and gloomy. The members of the household fancied he always shuddered when he entered the library, and looked as if he would have drawn back, but was irresistibly pulled forward. Such notions were, however, laughed at as idle dreams. He was constantly in the library, apparently fascinated to the place. A remarkable fact, also, which people afterwards remembered, was, that he generally wore large gauntlet gloves, extending half way up his fore-arm, and, when this was not the case, that deep lace ruffles fell over his hands and reached nearly to his knuckles. He seldom, too, shook hands with anyone.

IV.

Years rolled on. Hugh married, and became the father of four boys. Sir Marmaduke died, and Hugh inherited the title and estates. The times had grown more and more troublous. Popular discontent had increased to a high pitch, and the gulf between Charles I., and his people, widened every day. Every step taken by the King was, as we know, only

one nearer to the scaffold. The country was absolutely flooded with pamphlets exposing the disorders of the court. Shoals of these pamphlets were brought from Holland, by smugglers, who realised a large profit by their sale. The punishment for this offence was fine, imprisonment, and the pillory. But in times of national convulsions, Oppression frequently stalks beneath the mantle of Justice, which it drags through the blood of thousands, until it has dyed its pure ermine a dark crimson. The Court thought to put an end to popular resistance by redoubled severity, and accordingly was not scrupulous about overstepping the law. Orders were secretly despatched to the gentlemen and justices in Essex well affected towards the King, to punish with death all persons who might be captured bringing over or distributing any of the incendiary writings, as they were called, from Holland.

Among the most devoted, most bigoted, and most unscrupulous of the King's adherents was Hugh Arnell. One morning, a prisoner, apprehended with a large number of the forbidden pamphlets on his person, was brought up for examination. He was sentenced to death, but Hugh's manner when sentencing him was strangely agitated. He seemed almost to appeal to the man's mercy while pronouncing his doom; and to the surprise of every one, accorded the prisoner's request for a private interview.

The prisoner and his judge had recognised each other! Josiah Barton—such was the prisoner's name—was the person present in the library on the night of Margaret's murder. Immediately they were alone, Josiah said—

"Am I indeed to die?"

"You heard the sentence," stammered Hugh; "why should it not be carried into effect?"

"Because, if I suffer, it shall not be alone."

"Why—why not—what do you mean?" asked Hugh.

"Sir Hugh Arnell," replied Josiah, calmly and impressively, "you know what I mean well enough. Look round this room! look at yonder hearth! look at yonder chest! look at yonder spot, where she fell! Look at yonder window, and look at these hands! Trust me, I will not die alone!"

So speaking, he stretched forth his hands. The fingers, over which there was a frightful scar, were rigid and immovable.

"Silence! do not speak so loud!" exclaimed Hugh, in a low whisper.

"What would you have me do?"

"Save me!" replied his companion.

"How can I do so?" returned Hugh. "How can I do so? Oh! why did you ever approach this place? Why did you ever return to it?"

"Why? for a reason which you doubtless will not understand. On that horrible night when you committed the murder," said Josiah, solemnly, "I came here with no bad intent. I know not, in truth, why I came, unless it was in obedience to a mysterious impulse which I could not resist, and which I cannot describe; an impulse which guided my steps hitherward despite myself; an impulse which caused me to traverse your park; to enter your house, and to conceal myself in yonder recess, instead of rejoicing the vessel to which I belonged, and which was lying-to off the coast."

"But why, why did you now return?" said Hugh, with a shudder, "when you knew —"

"When I knew the false charge hanging over me," replied Josiah, interrupting him, "and the fresh danger I incurred from the work in which I was engaged! I returned to this neighbourhood, because I could not do otherwise. Because this time, it was more than an impulse which urged me forward—because it was actual force."

"Force!" murmured Hugh, nervously pulling up the gauntlet gloves upon his hands.

"Ay, force," returned his companion. "A mysterious force—a grasp which is not human!"

With these words, he drew back the loose sleeves of his seaman's doublet. On each of his wrists was the impression of a hand.

"I have committed crimes in my life, but not one that merits death. I have never murdered," he continued, looking fixedly at Hugh. "If I die, I risk nothing by revealing all. I will reveal all!"

"No, no, no!" shrieked Hugh. "Have pity; think of my wife—my sons! I will save you!"

The plan for Josiah's flight was soon arranged. He was confined in a strong apartment on the basement of the Hall, but Hugh furnished him with the key to open the door leading out into the park. He gave him also a sum of money. At nightfall the prisoner was to escape, having first, in order to avoid attracting suspicion to his deliverer, left in the lock a crooked piece of iron, as if it was with that instrument that he had pressed back the bolt. But there was one part of the plan Hugh did not mention!

Meanwhile, a report had circulated in the village that an attempt would be made by the friends of the prisoner to rescue him. On hearing it, the young men of the place, all of whom were tenants of Sir Hugh, hastily seized their weapons, and determined to march down to the Hall to protect it from any attack.

Just as they were approaching the confines of the park, they perceived a man advancing before them. He had crossed the bridge, when a bright flash and the report of a pistol issued from behind the parapet. The man sprang up in the air and then fell. At the same moment, a human figure darted out towards the body; but the moon burst forth suddenly, though only for an instant, in all her refulgence, from a dense cloud. That instant, however, was sufficient for the assassin to remark the hand of young men, whose approach he had not heard, as their footsteps were deadened by the snow, for it was Christmas Eve. He instantly turned and ran off in an opposite direction, under the cloak of darkness which again covered the earth. During that single moment, too, of moonlight, the words "Sir Hugh" were uttered by a dozen tongues.

The wounded man, who was no other than Josiah, was raised up, and carried into the village. Although he was not dead, his life was ebbing fast. He felt convinced of this, and requested that a clergyman might attend him. When the latter arrived, the wretched man dictated a long statement, containing an account of the horrible deed which, as he asserted, he had witnessed, and accusing Sir Hugh of being the person by whom he had himself fallen. This part of the statement agreed only too well with the impression of the young men. The sum of money also found upon him was a strong corroboration of its truthfulness, however much they were, at first, inclined to doubt the other portions of his confession. When the clergyman had drawn up the document, Barton had it read over to him. He nodded, for he was now too exhausted to speak, when the reading was concluded, as if to intimate that his words had been correctly taken down. He then signed the paper in full, and fell back. He muttered a few inarticulate sounds, and all was over.

The witnesses of this impressive scene were, for some little time, undecided what to do. They eventually determined on going to the Hall, and apprehending Sir Hugh. After searching fruitlessly most of the apartments, they came to the library. The door was closed; they broke it open. The room appeared, at first sight, empty and deserted, like the rest; faint groans, however, issued from its further extremity; and on the hearth, struggling among the glowing embers, lay the prostrate figure of Hugh Arnell. They hastened up to the spot, and, to their horror, observed that the unhappy being holding down his wrists. It was in vain they attempted to move him—the same mysterious power defied all their attempts. Not until life was quite extinct, and the body half consumed, could they succeed. When they did so, on each of the wrists—neither of which, by the way, was even scorched by the flames—they plainly distinguished the impression of a hand.

No doubt was now entertained of Sir Hugh's guilt, and his horrible career was regarded as a proof how easily, and, indeed, how inevitably one crime leads on to another. Among other facts, hitherto inexplicable, was the discovery of a human thigh bone, half-calcined, which had been found on Christmas Eve, seven years previously, in the kennel of Nero, Sir Hugh's favourite blood-hound.

Two centuries and more have elapsed since the date of the events we have recorded, but the recollection of them has survived up to the present day. It has been kept alive by strange circumstances, well known to all those residing in the neighbourhood of Coldbrook Hall. For three successive years, after the death of Sir Hugh, one of his sons died upon Christ-

mas Eve, and the marks to which we have several times alluded, and which are known for miles around as the Death-Grasp, were invariably found upon the wrists of the deceased. The remaining son was then taken to London at Christmas, and escaped. One hundred and fifty years later, the then representative of the family, disbelieving what he called such gross superstition, passed the ominous period at the Hall. On Christmas Eve, he was stricken down, with the fearful Death-Grasp upon his wrists. Ever afterwards the family have left the Hall a week or ten days before Christmas, and have never returned till some time subsequently, when they have been free from any special mortality during that period. But whenever and wherever an Arnell dies, he is always obliged to be held down in bed, a few minutes before his decease. An invisible power appears to be drawing him forcibly from where he lies, and his wrists are, in every instance, marked by the Death-Grasp.

Barton's statement, attested by the clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Burah, has been treasured up by his descendants, although they have frequently been offered large sums for it by the Arnells, who have constantly exhibited the most earnest desire to obtain possession of it. Our informant, Mr. Massey, told us also that his own grandfather, when about two-and-twenty, once in a spirit of bravado passed Christmas Eve, with a number of other young men, in Coldbrook Hall. He and his companions were discovered, lying senseless in the entrance the following morning, and the accounts they gave of what they saw, although they obstinately refused to divulge all the particulars, effectually prevented any one else from imitating their example. Mr. Massey, though a mere child at the time of his grandfather's decease, can perfectly recollect the serious expression which used to overspread the old man's features if the subject happened to be mentioned. His grandfather invariably directed the conversation into another channel.

In the face of what appears to us such convincing proofs, we do not hesitate to avow, that we believe, although we cannot explain, the strange and unearthly facts we have recorded. We have no doubt, however, that in the present advanced stage of knowledge, which ridicules such things as absurd, some famous electrician or celebrated chemist will, one of these days, satisfactorily and scientifically account for that terrible scourge—the Arnells—the DEATH-GRASP.

J. B.

GAROTTING;

OR, THE REIGN OF TERROR.

A Drawing-room Farce, in One Act.

By the Author of "The Mustache Movement," "The Criminal Quaker," "Medea," &c.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

MR. HORACE GENTLE, aged 30.

Mrs. HYPPOLITA GENTLE (his much better half), aged 25.

JOHN SLAUGHTER, a regular Tiger.

JANE LAMB, his intended dupe.

A 26½
B 27½ two Policemen.

LONDON, A.D. 1856.

SCENE I.—A sitting-room in Mr. GENTLE'S house. Evening. Candles lighted. Mr. GENTLE seated reading the newspapers.

GENTLE. Really, it is impossible to read the newspapers now-days without experiencing a choking sensation. If ever there was a ticket entitled to be considered the very reverse of the ticket, it is that peculiar species of ticket known as the ticket-of-leave. Here are five more cases of garotting—two of them by females. It is positively dreadful! It's all very well to say a man has no business to be afraid of a woman—that is a bit of pure bachelor ignorance. I, who have been married to Mrs. Hyppolita Gentle for six months, know to the contrary. And to think that I have to leave home every night at ten o'clock, proceeding through the most dangerous thoroughfares in London—streets that might well be called the garotted arteries of the metropolis—to fulfil my daily functions as editor of the "Morning Mullin" (with which journal is incorporated the "Ha'porth of Milk"). I am not a brave man—I admit it—except on paper; and am incapable of the slightest act of daring—that is, generally speaking. I committed one six months ago, when I led to the Hymeneal altar the dashing Miss Hyppolita Culverin, daughter of a fire-eating Crimean officer, a girl whose earliest perambulator was a gun-carriage, and who may be said to have been nursed on a camp-stool. What a wretch I was! I married her under false pretences. I told her I was as brave as a lion, when in reality I'm as great a coward as my own tiger—

(He runs against JOHN SLAUGHTER, who enters with a greatcoat and brush in his hand. Both start frightened at each other.)

GENTLE. } Who's there?

JOHN. }

GENTLE. What do you mean, sir, by coming into a room in that abrupt manner?

JOHN. Why couldn't you say you was here, sir? You've given me quite a turn.

GENTLE. John, you're no better than a coward.

JOHN. Never pretend to be better than my betters, sir.

GENTLE. John Slaughter, I have been deceived in you. I engaged you on the recommendation of an old and faithful servant.

JOHN. Yes, sir; and very kind it was of Jane too.

GENTLE. Yes; but Jane assured me you were a man of courage—one that I could trust with the care of my house and property.

JOHN. Why, sir, the fact is, there's just a little secret of mine—

GENTLE. Which I suspect already. (Aside.)

JOHN. You see, sir, Jane has received a military education.

GENTLE. Like Mrs. Gentle; her mother was Mrs. G.'s nurse.

JOHN. Well, sir—wishing to keep company with Jane, (saying your presence) and Jane's father being a distinguished officer—

GENTLE. A distinguished officer, John—I like that.

JOHN. Corporal Lamb, sir, has two wooden legs and a glass eye—it that ain't distinction I don't know what is—

GENTLE. Well, well! proceed!

JOHN. Well! she naturally has a weakness for brave people.

GENTLE. (aside.) What a remarkable coincidence! Just Mrs. G.'s case. Well, John—

JOHN. And so, if you please, sir, I told her I was one on 'em—

GENTLE. (aside.) So did I! How very extraordinary!

JOHN. But Lord bless you, sir, there never was a greater piece of deception in the world. I've kept it dark as long as I can. But I don't mind telling you, Sir, in confidence! only I hope you won't let on, I'm the greatest coward in the world.

GENTLE. John, I believe you (aside), and I'm the next.

JOHN. Lord, sir, if you knew the misery it was to me, going with you every night to the office, now these here garottes are about.

GENTLE. (aside.) I can imagine it.

JOHN. And now I've opened my heart to you, sir, I don't mind telling you, if you'd go without me, I'd be content to stop for half wages.

GENTLE. (aside.) I wouldn't go alone for twenty pounds! (sighs) John Slaughter, I cannot encourage such unmanly pusillanimity. It is time we were off already, for this evening.

JOHN. (shuddering.) Oh, Lord, so it is!

GENTLE. Help me on with my coat and hand me my gloves. (John obeys.) And let me hear no more of this poltroonery, if you please, sir. (Aside.) How I feel for the poor creature!

JOHN. After all, Sir, I don't know as I should be any the better off if you was to leave me behind. I should be frightened out of my wits for fear of burglars with nobody to protect me but Missis and Jane.

GENTLE. (aside.) He little knows how much more qualified those tender creatures are to protect him than myself. But it's time to go; John, lead the way, and imitate my firmness.

JOHN. Won't you say good night to Missis, sir? (Aside.) Anything to put off the terrible journey.

GENTLE. Mrs. G. is not well. She is gone to lie down. (Aside.)

* They emigrated to Boston, U.S., about fifty years ago.

JOHN. The fact is, I don't like saying good night to her. She always insists on lighting me out, and attracts public attention, and I like to get out unobserved. John, look out below.

Went for her.

JOHN. To catch her—see what sort of a night it is!

JOHN. On, we can see that when we get out, sir, as I said, I have a horse outside the house door.

JOHN. Will you give me such a horse to ride on?

JOHN. I'll be as good as dead if I don't see you in the morning.

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JOHN. I know it.

GENTLE. Look back, John, and see if they've gained on us.

JOHN. I don't, sir, for my life.

GENTLE. Then I must make the fearful effort myself. (looks round.) Goodness gracious! John!

JOHN. Yes, sir.

GENTLE. That's all right.

JOHN. I don't mean to say we've lost it then.

GENTLE. Yes, thanks to me. I am happy to say, thanks to my superior conduct, we have completely recovered it.

JOHN. I am sure I have nearly all, sir. I shall never have been able to do it.

GENTLE. I should thank you. You see what it is to be under the protection of a friend with courage and presence of mind. John, I'm sorry to say, I don't require it.

JOHN. I shall thank you. That's a fine piece of business!

GENTLE. That were a terrible piece of business, I admit. But courage and determination, which is, I have got the best of it.

JOHN. The biggest was eight feet high at least.

GENTLE. Now, John, you really make me smile, your fears lead you into error. Six feet four, if you like; it is true, that the fact of their being dressed in female attire would make them look taller. But you are not afraid. Let us just retrace our steps a little. The "Morning" will never get out of this state; and as I am a public servant, and am bound to attend to my duty at all hazards—(looking back to the police.) O. L. here they are.

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(They fall prostrate on the stage with terror. The two policemen rush out, and are seen no more.)

Mrs. G. Pray Heaven we have not been too abrupt with them. Horace Gentle, live for my sake, unless you wish to see me a blighted corpse by your side.

JANE. John Slaughter, get up, unless you'd like me to give you something for yourself.

GENTLE. That's all right!

JOHN. That's all right!

GENTLE. Hypocrite Gentle.

JOHN. Jane Lamb. (The two women raise their voices.)

GENTLE. You, then, were the ruffians.

JOHN. I'm made of steel!

Mrs. G. We were, and we know all. Forgive us for our negligence of your safety. We will never let you come out by yourselves again.

JANE. Poor dears, no! I should think not.

GENTLE. What will you protect us, make care of us?

Mrs. G. With all the courage and devotion for which the old 19th has been celebrated.

GENTLE. Then you couldn't compare me, my angel, than by seeing us safely to the "Morning Mail" office for its nearly time that the inside sheet went to press.

Mrs. G.—(in tone of duty command.) Form a line! Take close order!

(The others form a line—JANE as Corporal.)

GENTLE. I'm glad I married a military woman after all.

Mrs. G. I left shoulder forward! March!

[March—Right side, in marching order. Music, "Dashing White Sergeant".]

(CURTAIN FALLS.)

[N.B. The author of the above holiday absurdity, begs to inform such of his brother dramatists as are prevented by press of more important business, from inventing their own plots,—some of whom might possibly discover in the above the ready materials for a saleable broom, if not absolutely a broom ready made—that he intends amplifying the idea for the stage himself. To the honourable majority of the craft this intimation will be sufficient. The less scrupulous may be saved some trouble by the assurance, that the author will, most probably, have completed his task before the publication of this number of the "Illustrated Times."] R. B. B.

MRS. MARTINDALE'S ACCOUNT OF HOW LAST CHRISTMAS WAS SPENT.

LAST Christmas was certainly, taken altogether, about the most wonderfully happy festival which could fall to the lot of mortals to enjoy. Our neighbour, Mr. Maclean, our good friend of ten years' standing, had issued his invitation to us to join his family upon Christmas Eve, as had been his pleasant custom for the last ten Christmases. It was the old routine, but this time varied by several little circumstances which I am going to relate. The agreeable sentiment of old association had this Christmas the additional pleasantness of remarkable novelty. In the first place, my dearest Agnes was in the expectation of receiving the first visit of her betrothed after his appointment to the chaplaincy of Welwood, and although that was no great advance in the world, still it was a slight improvement in Everard Temple's prospects, as their affairs then stood, and cast a sunshine over the anticipation of their meeting. Dear Kate was returned from Mrs. Felsmayer's, so full of health, happiness, and improvement, that we were vastly proud of the little darling, and were only too anxious to show her to our kind friends the Macleans, who we knew would heartily sympathise with us.

The sole cause of anxiety which it pleased our Almighty Father at that time to visit us with, however, was one to us of great pain. For six months, or even more, we had ceased to receive letters from my dearest Walter, from that dear brother, who, after my poor husband's death, when all our misfortunes had come upon us thick and fast, had become a very father to my two girls, and in fact had expatriated himself in order to work more successfully for our support than he could have done in England. You know all the history of my poor husband's misfortunes, and of Walter's nobly leaving his own prospects to retrieve, if possible, our affairs. You can well believe, therefore, that when we had been led most joyfully to anticipate my brother's return by his last letters received—that is to say, a return within a twelvemonth at most—this sudden cessation of tidings filled us with the keenest alarm. This was the cloud upon our little household. Within my own heart, I already counted him as a victim at length sacrificed to the fearful climate of the Gold Coast, where he had so long sustained, amidst such extraordinary trials of health and strength, an almost charmed life. The numerous reminders of my dearest Walter's affectionate heart which hung around our walls—his little miniature painted before his departure, and which hung side by side with that also of my poor dear husband, and which met my eyes a hundred times a day; the very lion-skin which my feet trode upon whilst I sat before my desk,—all were so many voices speaking of my beloved absent, and, as I already secretly now believed, my lost one.

The dear girls were naturally anxious about their uncle, but both having been too young to remember him well at the time of his departure—Kate, in fact, was but a twelvemonth old—were not as unhappy as myself, and I sought to conceal my own fears from them, wishing, especially, that Agnes, whose own anxieties regarding poor Everard's prospects had clouded her youth for many months, should have no drawback to her peaceful enjoyment of Christmas.

There is, however, a psychical atmosphere which surrounds people, and, spite of themselves, betrays their mental condition. Thus it was that I felt my own state of depression had mirrored itself the night before Christmas Eve in my daughters. It was a very frosty and snowy time, as doubtless you remember. There had been but little communication either with the village or Dunsmore, our nearest town; all was buried under the soft masses of snow, which hushed the whole landscape around it into a hush as of death. The girls had been very full of merriment, however, in the morning, decorating the whole of our little house with holly and mistletoe, in expectation of Everard's arrival, which was to be on the morrow. They had set off early to the village in search of little Peter Bowman, to help them to obtain a good quantity of mistletoe, which grows profusely in a lane leading out upon the forest, but found Peter already started with a regular troop of village idlers, this idle, frosty time, men and boys, with Widow Bowman's donkey-cart, to collect mistletoe in wholesale. (See engraving, p. 412.) "Mr. Maclean," said the Widow, "will be making a precious grand time of it this Christmas, surely. He sent me word last week that I and Peter must hold ourselves ready to help his servants about decorating his laundry and the big kitchen—say nothing of the drawing-rooms—for all them poor orphans were coming up to-morrow; and a precious piece of work there is in the village to stow them all away—there are actually thirty of them! Bless you, young ladies, I cannot help crying when I think of it! What a good gentleman he is to have cared for the children of all those poor sailors who were lost in that horrible wreck; but you must have heard of the orphans coming this Christmas—haven't you? Well, he said he didn't want it talked about; but it's all over the village by this time, of course, for folks are making up beds for them. One, you see, young ladies, is going to sleep under the stairs; there! don't you think he may contrive to sleep pretty well?" And the widow, drawing aside a curtain fastened up in a corner of her room, exhibited with some pride to my daughters a very clean little bed, made upon the top of a large chest, which just fitted into a hollow place beneath the staircase which led to the upper chamber. "Yes, yes," she pursued; "and you see they are making all so smart at the manor, that not even the cart-load of green which we sent up yesterday is enough, so Peter and a lot of chaps that he knows set off ever so early again to-day to get the mistletoe which grows in Welby Lane—they will find lots there for everybody. Peter knew you wanted some to-day, and let me a big bunch to bring you myself when I went up to the manor, which I am just going to do, young ladies—so don't you bother yourselves to carry it."

The dear girls returned delighted with their mistletoe, and full of the news regarding the approaching festivities, while the widow poured forth from her willing lips and full heart—for she had been for many years a

servant of Mr. Maclean's, and like everybody connected with him, nearly or remotely, was delighted to speak of his benevolent remembrance of her and hers. Peter was actually going into Mr. Maclean's service with the New Year as stable-boy—the very thing of all others that he had coveted, ever “since he was able to distinguish a horse from a donkey,” said the happy mother, and all this Christmas time was kept at the manor to do a “heap of jobs,” but mostly, *she* thought, “if the truth must be spoken,” to help Master Henry and Master Thomas “to tend” their bird-traps.

But it was about the evening of this day that I was meaning to tell you. All day I myself had been unusually depressed, and instead of the dear girls' merriment driving away my melancholy, it even seemed to increase it. They wreathed the miniatures with holly, they swept and garnished all the house, and merry laughter was heard unceasingly—laughter which irritated me, alas! It must have been my mental atmosphere which

gradually enveloped their souls, poor children, for after our little tea-tray had been removed, and I asked Agnes if she would sing to me—I hoped that her dear voice might soothe and comfort my secret restless misery—to my surprise, whilst singing one of my favourite pieces, “Eve's lament for Paradise,” the dear girl burst into tears. She rose from the piano, and coming to my knees, laid down her head, and sobbed bitterly. It seemed as though both she and myself had been nursing the same forebodings, or at all events, that now the sadness within my own heart had penetrated to hers. We spoke freely to each other about our anxiety, and little Kate sat quietly on the hearth, and silently cried over her embroidery.

It was in the midst of this gloom that we were startled by a loud ringing of the gate bell, at which we all roused ourselves with a kind of terror, as though the sudden arrival could only be a something of ill omen. There

was a great talking and unusual bustle in our little hall, and the incessant barking of Agnes's spaniel, which quite drowned the voices.

“It will be Everard arrived sooner than expected,” said I to Agnes cheerfully, and I saw, by the expression of her face, that the same thought had struck her. We both hastened to the door. In the hall stood a man, rounded by people bringing in luggage, and wrapt in furs, a tall, dark-complexioned, and elderly man—not Everard. We paused, and looked at each other. It was but for a moment. I was weeping on his shoulder was Walter!

It must not be supposed that the arrival of my brother prevented our accepting the hospitality of our good neighbour; on the contrary, my brother most gladly united with us in the enjoyment. I was much pleased also to find that Everard who punctually arrived the



A COUNTRY LANE: CATHERING MISTLETOE.—(DRAWN BY A. SLADKE.)

made a very agreeable impression upon Walter. Thus we set out to walk the half mile, which separated us from the manor, in wonderful happiness.

The whole house was as if illuminated; we saw its many windows gleaming brightly with the cheerful ruddy glow of fire, or the clearer brightness of candlelight, as we descended the hill and first came in sight of this pleasant beacon of hospitality. All was joyous brightness, warmth, and Christmas greenery, as we stepped out of the clear, frosty air, into Mr. Maclean's hall, where burnt a huge log upon the dogs of the hearth, casting a rich crimson flush over the smiling faces of at least a dozen children standing or sitting around the fire. They were evidently one portion of the thirty orphans, as their varied attire spoke of several distinct orphan asylums and houses. To watch the arrival of the guests was their present amusement. Nor was the least pleasant picture which the

hall afforded, a very old woman, singularly precise in her attire, and wrapt up in a large scarlet plaid-shawl, who sat close up to the fire, with a little child—a young girl, with a peculiarly gentle expression of countenance—leaning her head upon her lap. I learned later that she was the great grandmother of the little girl, and of two boys also present; and also, like them, a recipient of Mr. Maclean's bounty.

The whole house was overflowing with young life. Besides the entrance hall, the servants' hall was especially devoted to the use of the children, until all were summoned by the gong to assemble in the laundry for dinner with the other guests! Yes, in the laundry! Let no one be shocked by the idea, unfashionable as it sounds. At all times Mr. Maclean's laundry must be a comfortable room; now it was converted into a beautiful dining-hall, worthy even of baronial hospitality. A great number of camellias and

myrtles, also several orange trees, had been brought in from the conservatory, and were grouped about in the corners of the room, which is both long and lofty. The walls were decorated with rich festoons of holly, mistletoe, bay, laurel, ivy, and fir. From the roof were suspended many Chinese lanterns; and at the farther end of the room, rising amidst a grove almost of green-house plants, was raised a temporary sideboard, covered with crimson damask, and enriched with several valuable pieces of plate and large golden flagons and goblets. Above these hung Reynolds's portrait of Mrs. Maclean's grandmother, encircled by ivy and holly.

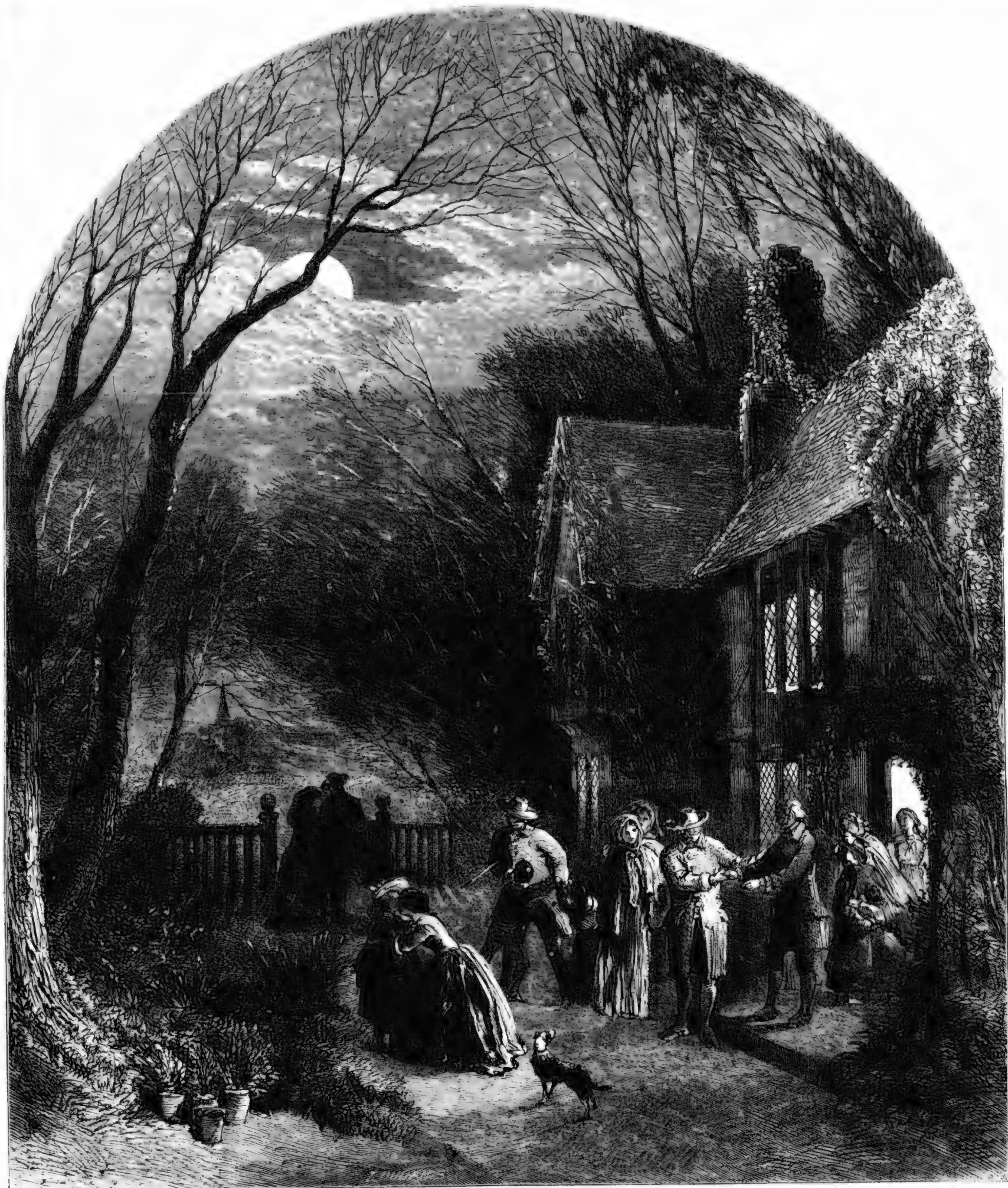
Two long tables ran along the room, with a shorter one crossing it and uniting the other too. This was the “dais” reserved for Mr. Maclean's special friends, whilst the orphans and various of their friends were arranged at the other tables. It was, indeed, a beautiful and affecting

to look down those rows of bright faces, and feel how much sunshine a kind human heart had been enabled to cast over this little assembly. The whole entertainment was of no ordinary kind, for besides there had been a ceremonious entrance of the "Boar's Head," a most excellent incident to the children, there was also present a very entertaining Mr. Maclean's, who, to amuse the children especially, volunteered singing of several songs during the course of the meal. Nothing could have been imagined more completely beautiful and harmonious than this Christmas dinner.

The remainder of the evening was spent in dancing and Christmas games, during which an unexpected incident occurred.

The children belonging to the old woman were suddenly summoned by Mrs. Maclean from their play of hunt-the-slipper. They started up very much surprised, and tanned very red. We were all standing by looking on, and wondered at the peculiar quick manner with which she called to them. "Caroline, be quick, deary," she said; "never mind, come directly, and George and Fred Townsend, where are you? come! come along with me; I've such a surprise for you." We saw and heard this, but in the midst of the children's merriment at one end of the room, and of a quadrille which was being formed at the other end, soon forgot the little circumstance, till Mrs. Maclean (sitting me aside, said, "The oddest thing has happened! There has been for several days in this neighbourhood a sick

man, who from his inability to travel in this severe cold, has had a hospital provided for him in our warmest room—I say a hospital, because his illness is very severe, and results from the loss of one of his legs. He had recovered sufficiently in the infirmary at Hastings to commence his journey northward, at least, so he believed; but he had not been long on the road, before the exertion of the journey, combined with the inclemency of the weather, completely overpowered him. Two mornings ago, my boys being down in the shrubbery, heard a groan, and looking over the fence, saw the poor fellow propping himself up against it, and evidently in great pain. They were filled with compassion for him, and having called to one of the gardeners to help him up, as he had fallen upon the ground, ran in to tell



THE RETURN HOME FROM A CHRISTMAS PARTY—(DRAWN BY BIRKET POSTER.)

me of the circumstance. My husband returned with the boys, and finding the man seriously ill, had him carried towards the stables. There he has remained ever since. Dr. Winstanley has seen him, and although he considered him in a serious condition, gave us hopes of his being able to pursue his journey in a day or two. He appeared a very silent, uncommunicative man, or that might be partly owing to his state of ill-health. This evening, however, he appeared wonderfully better, and hearing from the coachman, in whose care he had been placed, of the Christmas festivities in the house, and especially of the orphans, became much interested. Learning the name of the vessel in which the fathers of the children were wrecked, he started up in his bed, exclaiming, "Good Lord and Heavens!

my brother Will was on board her; Lord, Lord!" and fell back almost fainting. It was sometime before he spoke again; but when he did so, it was to inquire whether by any chance his brother's children were amongst the number provided for. He said that his own name was Frederick Townsend. The old grandmother and the children are now with him. I can assure you that the meeting was one I shall never forget. It seems by a strange coincidence that these sailors were twins, had always sailed together until this last voyage; and that Will and Fred, though then separated, had been shipwrecked in the same storm, though on different parts of the coast. Frederick had been so severely injured by being dashed with great force upon the rocks, that, although life was still within

him, such mischief had been done to his leg that amputation was the consequence.

The news of this unexpected incident circulated amongst the company, and reaching my dear Walter's ears, excited in him so soon as he had heard it the liveliest interest. To add to the singularity of the coincidences connected with these brothers, they had been sailors in the vessel which ten years before had taken Walter out to the Gold Coast. He remembered them perfectly, not only from the fact of their being so singularly alike in person and character, but from their having evinced great heroism in saving the life of the captain's little boy, who was washed overboard in a sudden gale. Walter accompanied Mr. Maclean out to the

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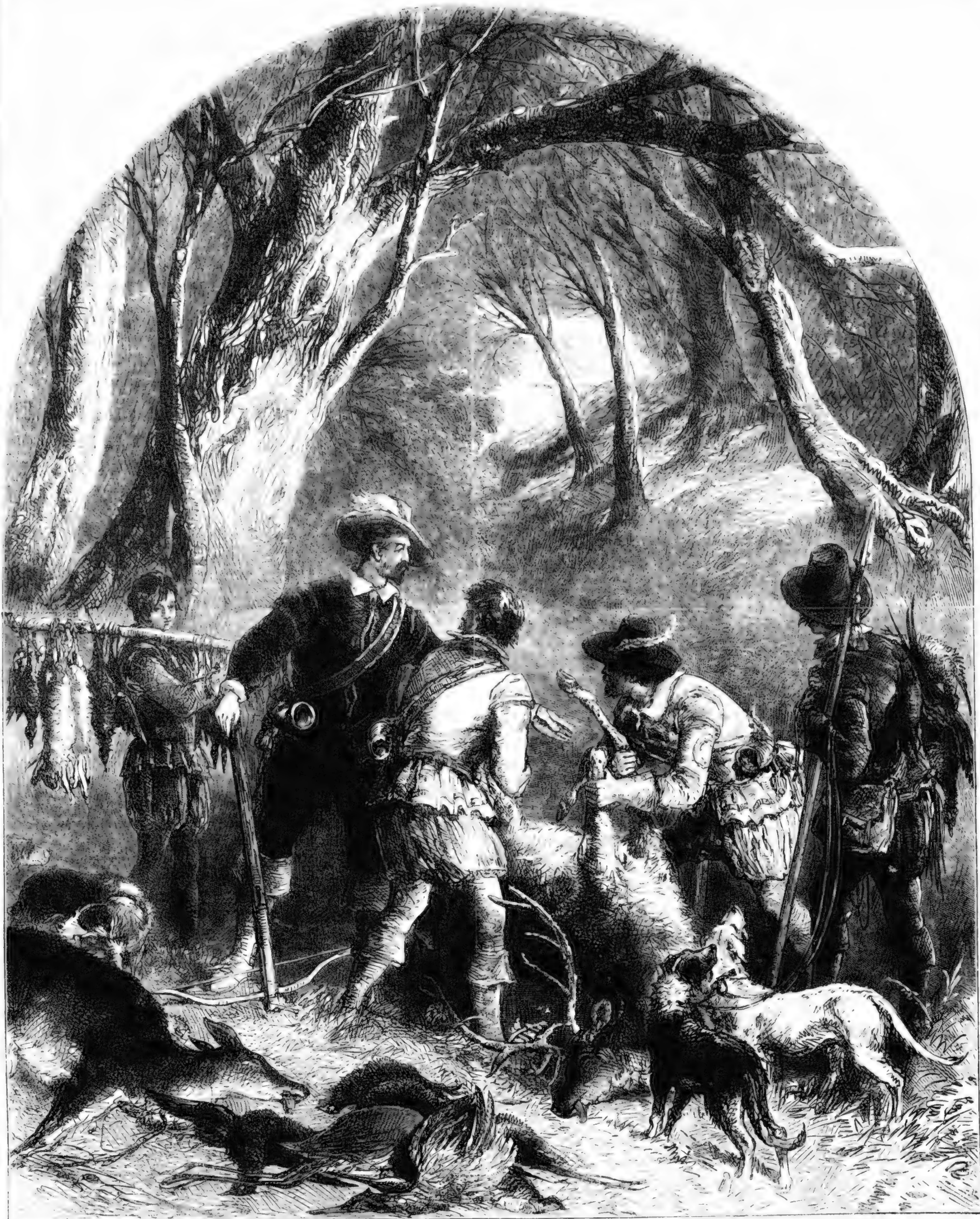
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FORESTERS WITH GAME FOR THE CHRISTMAS BANQUET.—(DRAWN BY BIRKET FOSTER.)

PROVIDING FOR THE CHRISTMAS BANQUET.

We, of 1856, when a madness seizes upon us for a feast on partridge or hare, when we long for the strong flavour of the woodcock, or the mellow relish of the pheasant, we, poor miscreants, are forced to seek our remedy at the poulterer's shop, where the consequence of an order is supposed to be a payment. A sudden raving for wild duck and sherry has been known to subside, and almost disappear, at the mention of fifteen shillings a brace. Even on Christmas Day itself, nobody would feel justified in giving a sovereign for a pheasant. Game is delicious, but we don't like it high, either in flavour or price. In fact, we like to have it sent to us as a present.

They of 1650, were in more convenient circumstances, as far as side dishes were concerned. Their poulterer's shops were the

forests, and an arrow executed the order. A cross-bow and a steady aim were all that were required for ensuring a banquet such as Alexis Nectar Soyer himself would love to cook, with cranes and storks at top and bottom, bitterns and woodpeckers as side dishes, and magpies as a remove.

Look at the illustration accompanying this article, and it will convey a very good idea of the extreme facility with which every luxury of the season could be procured for the Christmas feast. The tall gentleman, who is evidently the master, and has done all the shooting, does not appear at all tired, neither has the exertion of the sport been sufficient to derange his toilet. Yet, with his mere "stringed instrument" he has managed to knock over that very fine stag, besides a doe and several birds, rabbits and hares. That forest must have

been as full of game as Clerkenwell is of watchmakers. It must have been like shooting for nuts, certain to get something every time you fired.

Such a picture as that which Mr. Foster has produced, reminds us forcibly of the hunting incidents referred to in "As You Like It." What a change in such matters have a few trumpety hundreds of years wrought! "Killing the Stag," instead of being, as in the olden time, looked upon in the light of a noble act, would now be a matter for the cognisance of the assize judges. We therefore suggest the following alteration in the words of the famous hunting song, to adapt them to the present time.

HUNTING SONG.

(Appropos of the above.)

What shall he have that killed the deer?
Six months hard work, and twice to meet!

For his father's father wore it,
And as a coronet
CHORUS
The horn! the horn! the crumpled horn!
Toss'd to the man all tattered and torn!
His knees knock'd the man all tattered and torn!

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

The "Moniteur" contains an important article on the Neuchâtel question, the details of which it explains. The French Government intervened with wise counsels. It asked for the liberation of the Neuchâtelais prisoners so as to prevent any armed conflict, and to obtain a final settlement of the question.

Switzerland would not follow those counsels. "Moniteur" concludes with these words:—"Thus France met with moderation, a sincere desire to terminate a delicate question, and a courteous deference for her political situation, on the one side; on the other, on the contrary, an obstinacy much to be regretted, an exaggerated susceptibility, and a complete indifference to her counsels. Switzerland, therefore, must not be astonished if, in the course of events, she should no longer find the goodwill which she might so easily have obtained at the cost of a very slight sacrifice."

The approaching Conference occupies all the attention of political Paris. The copy of a diplomatic note, addressed by the Cabinet of Turin to the Russian Government, has been received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and its contents prove without doubt that the majority of voices will be obtained by England in the approaching Conference. It appears that Russia had requested Sardinia to give her opinion both with respect to the advisability of recommencing the Conference, and to the questions of the Island of Serpents and of Bolgrad. In this note Count Cavour admits that the text of Art. 20 of the Treaty of Peace is in favour of Russia, but he gives it as his opinion that the spirit of the article and the intention of the plenipotentiaries were to remove Russia from the lower Danube, and consequently to deprive her of the Bolgrad which she wishes to preserve. It is exactly this point which is to be examined by the Congress.

The intelligence that war had been declared by England against Persia, has excited a deep sensation in Paris. This sensation has been mainly created by the recent articles published by the "Nord" and other Russian organs, in which the interference of Russia is shadowed forth as highly probable. It is felt, we may presume, that this decision of the British Government, implies a stern determination to obtain the rigid execution of every treaty in which British interests are engaged; a determination well manifested at this moment, perhaps.

The Emperor and Prince Frederick William of Prussia left Paris on Monday morning for Fontainebleau, on a hunting expedition. Lord Clonville is among the persons invited to join the party.

It is confidently stated that the Emperor will pay his long-contemplated visit to Algeria in the spring, but the realisation of this project must of course depend upon the state of Europe—and other circumstances.

By an imperial decree M. Troplong has been appointed President of the Senate for 1857, and M. Mesnard, first Vice-President; and Marshal Count Baraguay d'Hilliers, General Count Regnault de Saint Jean d'Angely, and Marshal Pelissier (Duke de Malakoff), Vice-Presidents for the same period. Another decree of the same date appoints Count de Morny to be President of the Legislative Body for 1857; MM. Schneider and Revel, Vice-Presidents, and General Vast Vimeux and M. Hebert, questors.

It is rumoured that Cardinal Morlot's "high mission" to Rome has relation to the coronation of Napoleon III., which, should peace be consolidated, will probably take place in 1857.

After a review of some regiments of the Guards, lately, a deputation of the soldiery proceeded to the Tuileries, and presented to the Imperial Prince his *livret* as *enfant de troupe*—the "small book" which is given to every private soldier, and in which are recorded the state of his services, his omissions and commissions. His little Highness received the *livret* with becoming respect; and his nurse promised that it should be kept as clean as possible from bad marks.

SPAIN.

THERE is no news of importance from Spain. It is rumoured, however, that the Narvaez Cabinet is tottering to its fall; that that cabinet is in a state of prostration; and in every case of difference of opinion, the Duke of Valencia always ends by giving way. The Absolutist party seems to be gaining ground.

AUSTRIA.

THE removal of the sequestration placed on the property of the Lombardian emigrants having removed the principal motive for coolness which existed between Austria and Piedmont, the Vienna journals state that it cannot be long before diplomatic relations are re-established between the two countries. The names of the diplomatists, likely to be nominated at the two Courts, are already mentioned. Baron Jotcane, now resident Minister at Berne, will represent King Victor Emmanuel at Vienna, and as to the Austrian Minister in Piedmont, Baron de Kubeck, or Baron Paar, who has since 1853 filled the functions of *chargé d'affaires*, are considered the most probable to be appointed.

PRUSSIA AND SWITZERLAND.

THE Prussian journals announce that the Prussian Government has decided to the cabinets of Paris, London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg, its intention to have recourse to energetic and independent action in the Neuchâtel affair; and already, we hear, diplomatic communications have been opened to secure a passage to the Swiss frontier for Prussian troops. The "New Prussian Gazette" states, that the royal army will advance into Switzerland, seize a few important points, and hold them as a material guarantee until justice is done to the King's claims. On the other hand, the "Bund," generally considered the organ of M. Stampfli, the Federal President, recommends, in case Prussia should have recourse to arms, to march masses of Swiss troops immediately into the Grand Duchy of Baden.

The question of Naples, it has been suggested, may be much complicated by that of Neuchâtel, if the latter should lead to war, and for the following reasons:—The King of Naples has about 12,000 Swiss troops in his service, on whom he places great reliance. In the event of war, Switzerland would doubtless recall these troops for the defence of the Helvetic territory. The Federal Government has already spoken of this eventuality as a sort of menace, and it would be an additional reason for the amicable arrangement of the Prusso-Neuchâtel differences.

RUSSIA.

FREQUENT reports from St. Petersburg announce that the Russian Government is prepared to send an army to the aid of Persia. The Russian troops, it is said, are concentrated on the Araxes.

Letters have been received which allege that the Russian intervention will be carried into effect as soon as Prince Bariatinski, the Governor-General of the Caucasus, shall have been officially informed of the disembarkation of the English at Bushire.

ITALY.

THE attempted assassination of the King of Naples is the great topic in Italy. The "Times" correspondent gives the following details of this matter:—"The ceremony of benediction had just concluded, and the troops were defiling before his Majesty previous to their leaving the ground; when the 4th division of the 3rd battalion of Chasseurs was passing, a soldier called Agostino Milano, of San Benedetto, in the province of Cosenza, started out of the ranks, and made a thrust with his bayonet at his Majesty, who backed his horse. The bayonet, grazing the side of the King, struck against the pistol holster, and was bent. The man slipped and fell to the ground. At that moment Captain Latour, of the Hussars, riding up, nearly crushed the man, whilst another captain, riding out of the ranks, collared him. The King said, 'Consign him to the gendarmes'; and he was taken off the ground in a cab, accompanied by gendarmes. Persons who were very near observed that his Majesty turned deadly pale, and passed his hand secretly over the spot which was

touched, and then beckoned to his son, the Duke of Calabria, who was immediately behind him, and who, like the King, was on horseback. I say the King beckoned to him and ordered him not to move. He then waved his hand to her Majesty in salutation and assurance of his safety. In fact, his Majesty displayed the most wonderful sang froid, and thus prevented the occurrence of great misfortunes. The cry of 'Fui, fui,' so dreadful in a Neapolitan mob, had begun to be raised. Some of the carriages near the King were beginning to move, and in a moment all would have been disorder, and people flying back to the capital would have created immense consternation and disturbances that one fears to contemplate. But a cordon of soldiers was drawn around, no one was permitted to leave, and as his Majesty ordered the ceremony to continue, things resumed their original tranquil appearance."

In the evening Milano was interrogated. He demanded paper, saying that he would write his deposition. It was as follows:—"For six years I have cherished a hatred against Ferdinand II. I belong to the class of insurgents in Calabria in the year 1848. It was my intention to have purged the earth of this monster. I have not the slightest intention of revealing the name of my brethren who conspire like me to rid the world of this tyrant; but the occasion will come when their daggers will avenge all." At a court-martial subsequently held, Milano was sentenced to be hanged; and he was hanged accordingly.

Sicily is said to be restored to perfect tranquillity; but little reliance is placed on these reports, coming, as they do, from official sources alone.

The Emperor of Austria, it appears, has not yet decided on visiting Milan. His Majesty is said to be much disappointed with his reception in Italy, and complains of false representations having been made to him as to public feeling in Venice and Lombardy.

There is some anticipation of a change in the Sardinian Ministry.

AMERICA.

WE have little news from America. Kansas is tranquil, thanks, it would seem, to Governor Geary.

In some parts of Texas, Arkansas, Alabama, and Louisiana, considerable apprehension existed, at latest dates, of insurrections among the slaves. In Union county, Arkansas, a man was arrested on suspicion of exciting the slaves to rise upon their masters. He was tried and acquitted; but he afterwards professed to know all about the matter, and this getting to the ears of the citizens, they seized him, conveyed him to the woods, and shot him. Another man was hung after a trial on a similar charge.

A despatch, dated St. John's, Newfoundland, Wednesday, Nov. 26, states that the newly completed telegraph lines continue to work admirably, and kept that place in instantaneous communication with New York.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

WE have various reports of the progress of the Caffre prophet's machinations. In one journal we read, "There is some talk going on among the Siambees and the Gikas, as to whether they shall sow or not, the more prudent among them not being able to see clearly why they should starve." This would show that the natives are becoming alive to the real nature of the specious representations which have been made to them; but then the chief, "Krelli," is still urging upon the tribes in question to obey the prophet's injunctions." Another Cape newspaper states, on the strength of letters received from beyond the Kei, that the natives there are destroying their cattle at a "fearful rate," and that the prophet's reputation is as brilliant as ever. "Recent reports," this journal adds, "also show the prophet to be a man of much better views and more philanthropy than the generality of Caffres, it being his intent on after eradicating all vice from among the natives, to attempt 'the reformation of the European population!'"

It is satisfactory to hear, however, that the prompt arrival of troops had quieted all apprehension of disturbances on the frontier.

Sir George Grey is not in good health. His Excellency appears to be suffering from an old spear wound in the hip bone, received in Australia many years ago.

THE WAR WITH PERSIA.

WAR was formally proclaimed at Calcutta on the 1st of November. By another proclamation, such Persian merchant vessels bound for British ports are protected as sailed prior to the 1st of November, while to such as were loading in British ports immunity is granted if their cargoes are proved to have been taken on board within thirty days from the same date. Reservation, however, is made of vessels having on board Persian officers, or despatches, or articles contraband of war. A third notification assures all subjects of the Shah resident within the Queen's Indian territories, and not being consuls or consular agents, that they may pursue their respective avocations unmolested, on condition of peaceable behaviour. The last division of the British fleet left Bombay on the 13th of November. Five thousand troops are to occupy Karack and Bushire. The expedition is under the command (provisional) of Major-General Stalker and Rear-Admiral Sir H. Leake, with Brigadiers Stopford, Her Majesty's 64th; Honner, 11th Native Infantry; Trevelyan, Artillery; and Tapp, Cavalry, commanding brigades.

Six English ships, we hear, have arrived at the Island of Ormus, which they have occupied. Ormus, situate at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, is a small and almost uninhabited rocky island. Formerly it was a Portuguese depot of some importance; at present it belongs to the Imam of Muscat, a ruler in amity with England.

The heir to the throne of Persia, a boy six years of age, has just died.

THE RUSSIAN MEMORANDUM.—The "Indépendance" of Brussels says:—"The Russian memorandum on the question of Bolgrad is said to have been drawn up by Baron de Brunnow." The "Gazette" of Cologne says that the English reply to it was sent to St. Petersburg on the 23rd of November, and the Austrian on the 4th of December.

THE MAPS USED BY THE CONGRESS OF PARIS.—It is remarked by a Paris correspondent of the "Indépendance," with reference to the assertion made in the last Russian memorandum, that the maps of Bessarabia consulted by the plenipotentiaries who drew up the Treaty of Paris were not Russian maps, but were furnished by the French Government,—that although this is true enough, it is also true, as Count Walewski remarked the other day to some diplomatists present at one of his receptions, that these French maps were mere copies of Russian maps, which were prepared a long time ago.

THE CAPTAIN OF AN ENGLISH SHIP OUTRAGED.—The captain of an English merchant vessel, in port at Naples, complained to the Consul that one of his crew would not do duty; the man was therefore put under arrest. During the following night the crew of an American ship, who had heard of the arrest, boarded the English vessel, and struck the Captain (Alis) with a block of wood, fracturing his skull. He was conveyed to the hospital.

TARDY JUSTICE INDEED.—The criminal tribunal of Frankfurt-upon-the-Maine has, within the last few days, tried various persons who, on the 18th September, 1848, were arrested in the act of throwing up barricades in the streets of that city. They were condemned to various periods of imprisonment, none of which exceeds three years. These men have been detained in jail awaiting their trial upwards of eight years.

HAYTI IN DIFFICULTIES.—We have late intelligence from Hayti, to the effect that the Empire of Souleouque was in a state of perturbation; the designs of Spain, with the sanction of France, having caused great uneasiness to the Government. The Dominicans and Haytians bear the bitterest animosity towards each other, and it is believed that neither can long maintain their position.

GOLD IN CAYENNE.—A letter from Cayenne, of the 5th ult., says:—"The gold fever gains on us seriously. We herewith send you home 30,000 francs, the produce of a month's labour of thirty-five miners on the banks of the Araya, not far from the mountain which bears the name of the Empress Eugénie. Gold is discovered every day and in every direction; but it is the basin of the Approuague which produces the most brilliant results. Not a single foreign workman has arrived here, and the rich placers are left to the colony, the strength of which was previously insufficient for other purposes. The Governor left this morning for the Approuague, accompanied by M. Fayard, director of the interior, and by the chief engineer. He has gone to inspect personally the principal placers. It is a journey of twelve days, which we hope will secure to France the possession of a real California in this poor Cayenne, so roughly tried during two centuries."

THE ARCTIC VOYAGERS.—The Esquimaux inhabiting the Arctic regions in the vicinity of Pond's Bay, report that two more of the ships abandoned by Sir E. Belcher have drifted out of Lancaster Sound. The Esquimaux were recently found in possession of large quantities of iron and ship-fittings, the freshness of which made it evident that they belonged to a portion of Sir E. Belcher's squadron.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

THIS message of the President of the United States has been received. President commences by remarking that, in performing the duty of giving Congress information on the state of the Union, he has merely to express his personal convictions, but speaks as the representative of the Government called upon to seem impartially the country. The condition of these great interests and our private and public well-being, attests the predominant spirit which has characterized the American people.

Since the last session, a Presidential election has seen the sole act of the sole sovereign authority of the Union. It is to be apprehended the great principles which the votes of the people have sustained; they have asserted the constitutional equality of the citizens, in whatever region they dwell, or whatever they are, and they have proclaimed their determination to maintain the rights of different sections of the Union. In doing this, they have confirmed the idea of organizing in the United States any mere geographical divisions.

The pretences put forth to justify such an organization are then, by the President, at length, and the consequences to which it would lead are forcibly portrayed.

The President then speaks, first, in reference to negro citizenship, to the proceedings relative to the extradition of fugitive slaves—a question relating to the organization of territorial governments. In connection with the latter is the Kansas question. The message indicates the action of Congress in relation to the organization of the Kansas territories, goes over the causes of the difficulties in the territory not owing to the provisions of organic laws, but by the unjust treatment of persons not inhabitants of the territory; that interference, which inhibited itself by acts of an insurrectionary character or of other causes of law, has been repelled or suppressed by all the means a constitution and the laws placed in the hands of the executive.

The President states that he has no power to interfere in local elections, to the freedom, or to pass judgment on the legality of the votes, more power in the territories than he has in the States. If he had, the Government might be republican in form, but it would be a mere fact, and it he had undertaken to exercise it in the case of Kansas, he has been justly subject to the charge of usurpation and of violation of the dearest rights of the people of the United States. This portion of the message closes by expressing the confident trust that, as the restored peace in Kansas affords opportunity for wise legislation, either the Legislative Assembly, territory or Congress will take care that no act shall remain on its statute books in violation of the constitution or subversive of the objects for which it is framed, and will take all other necessary steps to assure to its inhabitants enjoyment, without obstruction or abridgment, of all the constitutional rights of citizens of the United States, as contemplated by the organic laws of the territory.

The financial statement is a very satisfactory one. The receipts of the treasury, from all sources, for the fiscal year ending July 1, 1856, were 7,691,000 dollars, which, with the balance then in hand, amounted to 92,250,117 dollars; expenditure, including 12,776,390 on the public debt, was 72,748,792 dollars. The public debt is now reduced to 30,737,129 dollars, the whole of which was paid in one year, without embarrassment to the public service; but, nevertheless, the Government cannot press the holders of the stock to part with it. The annual expenditure for the past five years has been at the average of 18,000,000 dollars; and the average expenditure for the next five years does not exceed that amount.

Additional legislation is recommended to remedy defects in the organization of the army, and to increase the military armament. The navy exhibits gratifying evidence of increased vigour.

The sale of the public lands for the last year amounted to 9,227,878 dollars, yielding 8,821,414 dollars; the whole number of acres located was 1,000,000.

The Post Office expenditure for the past year was 10,407,568 dollars, the receipts were 7,620,801 dollars, leaving a deficit of 2,787,046 dollars. This deficit is ascribed to the law of 1854, giving increased compensation to postmasters, as well as the increase of mail routes and railroad service, and the reduced rates of postage. Recommendations are made of new mail contracts on the routes to the Pacific.

The message next treats of the foreign relations, and states that the United States are on terms of amity with all other nations. Their relations with Great Britain are of a satisfactory character. The enlistment question is settled, and the Central American question.

The exports to Canada last year exceeded those of the year previous by 7,000,000 dollars, and the imports by 6,000,000 dollars. There is now an export and import trade of 42,000,000 dollars.

The efforts made to relieve the trade to the Baltic from the Sound Dues has not been successful. The strong appeal made by Denmark for a temporary suspension of definite action was acceded to, upon the condition that the sum collected for a year, from June 16, 1856, should be matter of future adjustment.

With Spain, remarks the President, there have been new difficulties, and there has been no adjustment of old ones.

The circumstances are next detailed attending the proposition submitted by the United States to the European Powers, that private property, except contraband, shall be exempt from seizure by public vessels of war. This proposition, which has been submitted to the Maritime Powers, has not been rejected by any, and is favourably entertained by all. Russia has explicitly approved of it, and will co-operate in getting the assent of the Powers.

The relations between the United States and Mexico, Nicaragua, and New Granada, continue to be embarrassed by the frequent revolutions of these States. Mexico continues to refuse reparation for past injury. Diplomatic intercourse is suspended between the United States and Nicaragua, because of the difficulties arising from the de facto government, and the most serious questions have arisen with New Granada, growing out of its recent tonnage and postage laws; the latter of which, by imposing a toll of three dollars on every pound of merchandise going across the Isthmus, would take two millions of dollars annually from American citizens, in addition to the sum paid by the Panama Railroad Company. As these laws violate treaty stipulations, it will be a duty to resist their execution. In addition to these grievances is the demand for reparation on New Granada for injury done to American citizens in the recent civil war. It is precarious to protect life and property there, that a naval force is maintained on the coast, and may not prudently be withdrawn until these questions are settled.

The message closes with congratulations on the peace, greatness, and felicity, which the United States now enjoy. We have, it says, reached the stage of the national career when dangers and efforts are incidents, not of weakness, but of strength. In our foreign relations, we have to temper our power to the happy condition of neighbouring republics, and to place ourselves in the most auspicious dignity of right by the side of European empires. In our domestic relations, we are to guard against the internal shock of interests and ambitions, which are the natural result of our political elections. The President expresses the expression of his profound gratitude to the good Providence which has carried the country through many difficulties, and which enables him to contemplate the spectacle of amicable and respectful relations existing between the United States and all other governments, and of the establishment of constitutional order and tranquillity throughout the Union.

OBITUARY.

BUTLER, HON. GENERAL.—On the 7th inst., at Paris, aged 76, died Lieut.-Gen. Henry Edw. Butler, Colonel of the 65th Regiment of Foot, and heir presumptive to the Earldom of Carrick. He was the second son of Henry Thomas, second Earl of Carrick. He entered the army, as ensign 27th Foot, in 1810, and became lieutenant in the same year. He served in Egypt, and with the Portuguese army in 1810-11, was wounded at Busaco, and received the Peninsula medal with two clasps. He married, in 1812, Jane, daughter of Clotworthy Gowan, Esq., by whom he had issue four sons, of whom only, Pierre, in boy orders, has survived him. The other three were noble soldiers, and fell heroically in the cause of their country in the space of three months; the eldest fell at Inkermann, and the name of the youngest is rendered immortal by the defence of Silistra. General Butler married, secondly, in 1841, Frances, daughter of J. P. Toulson, Esq., by whom he had a son and a daughter.

SEYMOUR, F. C. ESQ.—On the 7th inst. died Frederick C. Seymour, Esq., fourth son of Lord Hugh Seymour, and brother of the late Sir Horace Seymour, and Admiral Sir George F. Seymour, and grandson of the late Marquis of Hertford. He was born Feb. 1, 1797. He married, first, in 1822, Lady Mary Gordon, third daughter of the late Marquis of Huntly, and second, in 1832, Lucy Augusta Hervey, eldest daughter of the Marquis of Bristol.

MILMAN, GENERAL.—On the 5th instant, died Lieut.-General Francis Milman. He went to Portugal in 1808, and, as aide-de-camp to Major-General Crawford, was present at Roliça and Vimiera. He afterwards shared in Sir John Mordaunt's campaign and retreat. In 1809, he joined the Coldstream Guards at Lisbon, and he was present at the capture of Oporto and the battle of Tanagra. Wounded in this battle, he narrowly escaped death in the conflagration—the dry grass had been set on fire—which swept over part of the field after the combat; being left in the hospital at Talavera, he fell into the hands of the French, and was detained in France until 1814. By his death the colonelcy of the 82nd Regiment is vacant.

DYSON, DAVID.—On the 9th instant, at Rushmore, at the early age of thirty-three, died Mr. David Dyson, a well-known naturalist and indefatigable collector. Originally he was a weaver, but a passion for entomology led him at the age of twenty to the United States. There, supporting himself by his industry, he contrived to cross the country from New York to St. Louis; and he returned to England, after an absence of twelve months, with upwards of 18,000 specimens of insects, birds, shells, and plants. He afterwards twice explored Central America, and made another huge collection. He acted as curator to the museum of the late Earl of Derby, until it was sold by the present Earl. Mr. Dyson has left behind him a private collection of 20,000 shells, some of them very rare.

IRELAND.

DR. CULLEN'S ANNUAL PASTORAL.—Dr. Cullen's annual Christmas pastoral—twenty-eight pages of close print—was read on Sunday week in all the Roman Catholic churches of Dublin. It treats almost entirely of the education question as affecting the Irish Catholics. As might be supposed, Dr. Cullen condemns the Queen's Colleges, and repeats the fact that they have been declared by the Pope "dangerous to faith and morals," a declaration solemnly published by the Synod of Thurles. Next he speaks of the National system in terms of qualified approval, because in practice the schools are united to a very great extent, but he objects to the books compiled by the Society.

BATHING SUPERSTITIONS.—The Irish Court of Queen's Bench has given a verdict of £500 damages against the Rev. Mr. O'Reilly, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Athlone, for a libel against Mr. O'Sullivan, a gentleman of his congregation. The libel complained of was that the plaintiff had seduced his governess, and that he had to fly the country in consequence of having robbed every body.

TREASURE TROVE.—Three hundred George III. guineas were found in an old clock lately, at a house formerly inhabited by Mr. Patrick Steen, at Achre Castle, Newry. The accredited history of the precious metal is that Mr. Steen, having been robbed, about thirty-five years ago, of a large quantity of plate, was infuriated by fear, and buried this money in his bedroom-floor, and, having died in his dotage, did not reveal the whereabouts to his only daughter, who is now married.

THE MURDER OF MR. LITTLE.—A discovery has been made at the Broadstone terraces, Dublin, which, it is hoped, may afford a clue to the murder of Mr. Little. On Thursday week, workmen were engaged in a house behind the carriage-factory. The master carpenter, Brophy, found a bag on some cross-railers, which were over a high staircase leading to an upper floor. The bag was saturated with water, and could not have been ten minutes in the place where it was found. The police were immediately on the spot, and an active search was at once commenced for the remaining portion of the missing money. The bag, on being opened, was found to contain £43 17s. 6d. in silver, and there is no doubt that it is one of those which had been taken out of Mr. Little's office on the night of the murder; inasmuch as Mr. Little's sister asserts that she made it for him, for the purpose of holding coin. One of the reasons assigned for the bag being wet is, that it had been taken out of a tank which stands at the foot of the staircase, and which supplies a boiler used for generating steam to heat a portion of the factory where the railway carriages are painted. Others assert that it was not out of the tank it was taken, as there was no impression on the soft sediment at the bottom of the tank when it was drained, and that it must have been taken out of some water in another place. There are no signs of water on the stairs; and it is supposed the bag, on being taken out of the water in which it was lying, was placed in a basket and conveyed to where it was discovered. A man named Dowd, an engine-driver employed by the railway company, has made a most important announcement. He says that after midnight on Friday week, he had occasion to go into a back yard in the rear of his house, when he saw a man muffled up come to one of the windows in the side of the building where the money was found the next day; he pushed a plank through the window, and rested one end on the window sill and the other on a high embankment in a garden adjoining. He went out by the plank with something in a handkerchief, and returned in a quarter of an hour, entered the building by the plank, which he pulled in after him, and closed the window. Dowd is under the examination of the police.

BOAT ACCIDENT.—THIRTEEN LIVES LOST.—A large sail-boat arrived in Limerick on Monday week, with a cargo of corn; and, having sold it, the boatmen started at an early hour the next morning, before the storm had fairly commenced. As is usual, a few persons from the islands who were in town availed themselves of a passage home in the boat, and accordingly nine men and two women were in the boat when it started. The crew fortunately only numbered two more. When they arrived at Beagh Castle, the hurricane being at its height, they cast anchor and lost it, and had then to run for the islands. Unfortunately the attempt proved ineffectual, as the boat grounded and upset. Every soul perished, and the smack went to pieces. The farmers who owned the corn were among the passengers, and had in their possession the sum of £150, which, of course, was also lost.

MONUMENT TO MOORE.—The general committee of the national monument to be erected in Dublin to the memory of the poet Moore, have finally, after several references and inquiries, selected as a site for the statue, the end of College Street, opposite the eastern front of the Bank of Ireland.

SCOTLAND.

GREAT FIRE AT GLASGOW.—There was a great fire at Glasgow recently. A large block of buildings, occupied principally by merchants engaged in the trade in cotton goods, near Exchange Square, was gutted, and the loss is estimated at £100,000. The fire was attended with loss of life: some firemen had entered an upper floor; it gave way, and three of the men fell to the basement; one was killed, and the others were dangerously hurt.

ART MANUFACTURE EXHIBITION AT EDINBURGH.—The first annual exhibition of the association recently established in Scotland to encourage the application of art to objects of ornament and utility, was opened at Edinburgh on Saturday evening last by a brilliant and fashionably attended conversation. The fine double range of halls comprising the new National Gallery was thrown open for the occasion, being the first time that the entire suite of rooms has been used for the exhibition of art. Nearly the whole of the twelve large octagonal saloons were hung and studded around with the productions of art. Excluding the fine arts as such, the exhibition embraces all those various branches and forms in which art seeks to manifest itself in household decoration and in the appliances of daily life. Under the auspices of an association in which the leading names of Scottish society may be found, the exhibition is not in any sense a mere display of Scottish art. A liberal invitation has been held out to all, and the leading English firms have come forward with collections which are both large in extent and exquisite in detail. There are also numerous specimens of French and Italian art shown, and even the remotest quarters of the world are represented in one department or another. The exhibition is to be an annual one, alternately in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The plan of working the association is similar to that of the Glasgow Art-Union; each member subscribes a guinea a year, and certain prizes will be distributed by lottery.

THE PROVINCES.

A NARROW ESCAPE IN A CHAPEL.—The Rev. Charles Vince, the minister of Mount Zion Chapel, Birmingham, was approaching the conclusion of his sermon on Sunday week, when suddenly a large quantity of plaster in the centre of the ceiling fell into the body of the chapel. It was at first thought that the roof was giving way, and a panic seized the congregation, but, luckily, only for a moment. The plaster which fell struck against the front part of the pew in which sat a Mr. David Neal, with several members of his family. The falling mass, which weighed at least sixty pounds, descended from a height of between thirty and forty feet. It grazed his nose, struck him lightly on the knees, covered him and his sons with dust, and smashed to pieces a small wooden projection in front of him used to deposit books upon. The heavy border plaster kept its form until it came into contact with the pew, and was then broken into pieces, some of which weighed five pounds. A great many ladies fainted, and the excitement was so great that the preacher seemed it right to dismiss his congregation as soon as the benediction could be pronounced.

CONFESSION OF A MURDERER.—Twenty years ago a Mr. Hocknall, the landlord of the Three Greyhounds' Inn, in Allostock, near Northwich, was drowned in the river Dane, under mysterious circumstances. On the day of his death, Mr. Hocknall had been seen in the company of one Ann Griffiths, alias Ann Burns, a woman who was in the habit of attending the fairs in Cheshire, to sell nuts. Ann Burns and another woman were brought before the magistrates on suspicion of having drowned the poor man, but the evidence not being sufficient to commit them, they were discharged. During the last week, Ann Burns died in Leitch, and shortly before her death confessed to having been in company with Mr. Hocknall on the night in question, by the river side, and he being intoxicated, she first robbed him, and then pushed him into the water.

BURNED TO DEATH.—A fire broke out on Sunday morning in a cellar of a house in Raglan Street, Liverpool, and a man, named David McKillop, an engine-tender, and his wife, Jane McKillop, who lived in a cellar, and who were intoxicated the previous night, were burned to death, while the house itself was completely gutted, and a family who occupied the upper storeys narrowly escaped destruction.

BANK FAILURES.—The suspension of the Kidderminster Bank of Messrs. Farley, Turner, and Co., is announced, in consequence of the death of Mr. Abraham Turner, its last representative. It was a bank of issue, with an authorised circulation of £14,800, but the amount of notes out is believed not to exceed £7,000 or £8,000. The general liabilities are said to be small. Nothing has transpired as to the prospect of their being liquidated in full, beyond an intimation that there is some hope the business may possibly be resumed.

ADULTEROUS ROBBERY.—A few days ago three men entered the Crown Tavern, Jamaica Street, Bristol, and sitting down in the parlour, called for some drink. The parlour is divided from the bar by a partition, and upon the landlady going into the parlour, one of the men placed a chair against the door, and prevented her from returning to the bar. Another went from the parlour into the side passage, and beckoned to a comrade in the street, who came in, and both entered the bar, and attempted to carry off a desk which was there. The desk, however, was screwed down to a kind of counter, and they began wrenching it off. The landlady, seeing what was going on, managed to get out into the passage, but was followed by one of the men, who knocked her down. She had no sooner recovered herself than she was again knocked down and kicked several times. The other fellows succeeded in wrenching off the desk, from which they obtained between £10 and £12 in gold and silver, and the whole gang then made their escape.

THE PRESS AND THE PEER.—Lord Hastings threatened the editor of the "Norfolk News" with personal chastisement if he indulged in further remarks on a decision he Lord Hastings had given in a rabbit warren case. His threat having been ineffective, he waited upon the editor. The Norfolk editor is the taller man of the two, and, in reply to the angry peer, forbearingly admonished him of the consequences of reducing himself to the responsibilities of a scold. The alternative was offered him, of peaceful retirement or forcible ejection;

EXTRAORDINARY ACCIDENT.—Four boys were recently precipitated down the side of a quarry, at Bessing, in Staffordshire, and two were killed. To the astonishment of those about the spot, the two others were hauled up alive. They were placed in a straw, and carried some, where they died. They were perfectly free from pain, and able to converse with their friends. In answer to a question as to what was the sensation experienced in falling, one of them said he felt as if he was flying.

DESPERATE ENCOUNTER WITH POACHERS.—On the morning of Thursday week, Deason Firth, a gamekeeper, was out on the watch, with two others, in the preserves of the Earl of Rose, at Heston, near Bradford, when they encountered two men, one being armed with a gun, and the other with a large bludgeon; two lurchers dogs were with them. As the keeper approached, one of the men presented his gun, at the same time crying, "I'll shoot." Nothing daunted, however, Deason Firth instantly rushed at the man who held the gun, and seized him behind, thus preventing him firing; but he had hardly done so when the other poacher struck him a severe blow on the head, which knocked him down and produced a severe wound, from which the blood flowed profusely. As he fell, the other poacher also immediately struck him with his gun. A desperate struggle followed, and as the man with the gun was at length overpowered, his companion, who had been the most violent in the attack, took to his heels, and unfortunately got away. The man with the gun (which was found to be loaded), was arrested, and removed to the lock-up at Bradford. He was recognised as an old convicted poacher, named William Burton, residing at Manningham, a township adjoining that of Heston. At noon the prisoner was placed in the dock at the West Riding Court, and first committed for a term of three months to hard labour, on the charge of night poaching, and was next fined £5 for the assault on Firth, and committed for an additional two months in default; being required also to enter into sureties at the expiration of these terms for his good behaviour.

SACRILEGE AND FLEO DE SE.—On Sunday morning, the clerk at St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church, Liverpool, missed several articles of plate from the altar, and on looking about the premises, detected a half-starved German, Johannes Gumsavage, against the door, with the missing plate in his possession. He was given into custody, and taken to a police-station. The keeper took him his dinner at half-past two o'clock, and on going back again at five minutes to three, he found him strangled with a handkerchief tied to an iron bar, with which the shutters were opened and shut. He had, in the meantime, eaten his dinner and drunk a quart of water. At the inquest a verdict of "Felo de se" was returned.

FIRE AT THE FARNWORTH PAPER MILLS, NEAR BOLTON-LE-MOORS.—A fire broke out last week, at about twenty minutes before four o'clock, in the extensive paper works of Messrs. John and T. B. Crompton, and was not arrested until the building and an adjoining rag store were a mass of ruins. When the building fell, a portion of the burning materials alighted upon the glass roof of an adjoining shed, in which there were three valuable paper machines. The roof was partially destroyed, but the fire got under before much damage was done to the machines. A 24-horse engine, used to drive these machines, was considerably injured by the fall of the walls and roofs of the large building; but fortunately, Messrs. Crompton have water power, so that no part of the works will be stopped. The damage is estimated at £6,000, upon which there was no insurance.

GREAT FLOODS IN CONWAY VALLEY.—The town of Llanarst, situated in the Vale of Conway, was completely inundated during the late gale and heavy rain. The whole of the vale, which lies between Carnarvonshire and Denbighshire, was one vast lake, and all communication between the two counties was cut off. Several of the streets in Llanarst were totally impassable. A few people attempted to go to St. Mary's Church, but had to be conveyed through the water in cars. Houses were deluged to the depth of many feet. When the water had subsided, cartloads of mud had to be removed from almost every dwelling.

DISASTERS AT SEA.

THE AMERICA, MAIL-STEAMER, ONE OF THE CUNARD LINE, WAS COMPELLED TO PUT BACK TO LIVERPOOL, IN CONSEQUENCE OF SEVERE DAMAGE INCURRED DURING A BURNING OFF CAPE CLEAR. Such a tremendous sea struck the ship on the starboard side, that the paddle-box was crumpled to fragments, and the forward saloon (built on the deck) reduced to a mass of ruins; two boats were carried away, and the bulwarks destroyed; while a hundred tons of water poured into the ship, deluging all below, and half-filling the engine-room; another wave of like magnitude and momentum would probably have sent the vessel to the bottom. The saloons on deck were full of passengers; yet, wonderful to tell, no one was dangerously hurt.

The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamship Candia, left Malta on the 24th of November, a strong gale was blowing at the time from the northward and westward, with a heavy head sea, which weather continued on the 25th, when George Brown, able seaman, was washed off the bowsprit within five feet of the after gangway. Much water was shipped throughout this and the following day, when it blew a heavy gale with terrific squalls, and the steersmen were hoove over the wheel, of which all but three spokes were carried away, causing a fracture of the arm of John Waidworth, another seaman. At about 2 p.m. the main shaft broke right through, completely disabling the engine. At 3:30, the wind having died away, the starboard cutter was despatched with an officer and eight men to report the disaster to the British Consul at Tunis, and seek assistance at that port, and soon after it became nearly calm, but there was a strong current running, setting the vessel right on to Zembra. In this state of things, the anchors were got over the bow with thirty fathoms' range on each cable, the boats were cleared and provisioned, and the passengers told off for embarkation on board them; tow-lines were also got ready for the boats, in case any chance presented itself of getting the vessel's head round. At 6:45 shipwreck appeared inevitable, but, providentially, at 6:50, a light breeze sprang up from the W.N.W., and at 7 the vessel gathered sternway, and braced sharp up. To attempt to stay the vessel without sufficient room to wear was utterly useless, and they therefore had no alternative but to keep her to the wind to endeavour to reach the bay of Tunis, where they anchored at about 12 o'clock. The mails and most of the passengers were conveyed to Marseilles by a Tunisian steamer. The Candia was got back to Malta for repairs.

The steamship Cleopatra arrived at Devonport on Sunday morning, and reported that, when 100 miles north-west of Cape Finisterre, she fell in with the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamship Azoff, leaky, and in a sinking state. The Cleopatra put six marines on board the Azoff, and remained by her four days, leaving her on Saturday morning on her way to Southampton. The steamship Madrid was got in readiness at once to proceed to the assistance of the Azoff. The Madrid met her off Portland, and accompanied her to Southampton. The Azoff left Southampton on the 1st inst., bound for the Mauritius. She was deeply laden, and met with terrific weather. She reached as far as the Bay of Biscay, when she was obliged to return. The hatchways were battered down for forty-eight hours, on account of the fury of the storms. The crew were without food during that time. She was pooped by a sea which carried away her wheel, and did most serious damage; a boatswain, one of the engineers, several firemen, and a boy, have been seriously injured.

Intelligence has been received of several wrecks off the Cumberland coast. Amongst others are the schooner Lady Huntington of Maryport, and the brig Swift, of Whitehaven, and Derwent of Workington, all of which are complete wrecks, but the crews are saved. The schooner Tenerife, Captain Hoare, bound from Zante for Liverpool with a cargo of currants, is on shore at Sellfield, about eight miles to the south of Whitehaven. The crew saved themselves by great exertions, and the cargo, which is much damaged, is being discharged under the superintendence of Lloyd's agent. The Leander, Captain Kidd, with a cargo of sugar, from Madras for Liverpool, put into Whitehaven in a very leaky state. According to the account of the captain, the Leander had been beating about the Channel for thirty days, during which time the crew, consisting of seventeen men, have suffered incredible hardships. The action of the salt water upon the raw sugar caused it to emit a very offensive steam, which caused the men to become stone blind. For several days they had to be led from the fore-castle to the pumps and back again, after having worked till they fell down from exhaustion. Several cats which were kept in the hold to protect the cargo and stores from the vermin died from the effects of the exhalations from the sugar. When the vessel came into port she was making nearly two feet of water in the hour, and the crew so exhausted as to be utterly unable to man the pumps.

Three watermen of Ryde went in a boat called the White Mouse, and were returning from Southampton, when a heavy squall came on which capized and sunk the boat; the cries of the poor fellow were heard on board the quarantine vessel at the Motherbank, the hands on board which immediately put off to the relief of the drowning men, and succeeded in saving two.

The master and two men of the schooner Crescent, of Interkeithing, from Antwerp, left the ship in a small boat for Leigh, to receive orders. They left for ship again late in the afternoon, notwithstanding that a severe gale was blowing at the time, which as night advanced increased in violence. Next morning, the wreck of the boat and the bodies of the men were found scattered on the beach at Pettycourt harbour.

The ship Royal Family took fire on the voyage home from Calcutta. Every effort was made to keep it under, whilst the boats were got ready and provisioned, in case it should be necessary to desert the vessel, which was kept before the wind. Luckily, a French vessel, the Rosa, bore in sight before that necessity arose, and keeping by the burning ship the officers and men were therefore all saved. The vessel was, of course, completely destroyed.

"RAILWAYS AND REVOLVERS IN GEORGIA"

MR. ARROWSMITH has again addressed the "Times." He says—"I repeat that the whole of my narrative is substantially true, and that the scenes therein described were but too real. Never thinking to publish an account of these scenes, I did not provide myself as I might have done on the spot with any evidence; nor did I inquire or learn the name and address of any of my co-passengers, so as to obtain evidence afterwards; therefore my assertion stands unsupported." The "Times," in some remarks on this letter, says—"Even at the time we express our entire incredulity as to Mr. Arrowsmith's statements, and our utter inability to explain whether he has been the victim of a hoax or the dreamer of a dream, we are bound to give him the benefit of his irreproachable character. On the other hand, we freely admit that it seems just as impossible that the series of events described by Mr. Arrowsmith should have happened on any English railroad as upon the line which, according to him, was the scene of such enormities. Mr. Arrowsmith cannot surely fail to see that it is not enough to oppose the mere renewal of an affirmation to the positive testimony which has been given against him, confirmed or supported as that testimony is by the inherent probabilities of the case. It is, of course, possible that a dozen passengers by the mail-train to-night to Dover should separate into parties of two at Reigate, and that six should shoot six. It is also possible that between Reigate and Dover one of the surviving champions should murder a child, and throw the body out of the window. If an strange story were told us by the most respectable man in England, we should be very much surprised, and think that that most respectable man pretty much what we are compelled to think of Mr. John Arrowsmith—that he was under an hallucination."

A letter worth notice has been sent to the "Times," the writer of which signs himself "T. S." He says—"Among all the letters that have been volunteered on this 'American question' I have been the most surprised at the blank improbability which is sought to be thrown on it in those of Mr. Robert Howe Gould (an American who investigated the affair). Strange as it may appear, in the simplicity of my heart, had I required any corroborative testimony in favour of the probability of Mr. Arrowsmith's narrative, Mr. Gould would have been the very gentleman to whom I would have referred. Surely he can hardly have forgotten the account which, on one occasion at my club, he gave to me and others in reference to a fight with bowie knives in a railway carriage at night, and in which he and his friends were something more than mere spectators. The horrors of that night, so vividly depicted by him, certainly startled, though the narrative itself did not astonish me. At all events, I should have felt myself much safer in the carriage among Mr. Arrowsmith's duellists than I should in that so graphically described by my friend."

Mr. Gould has replied. He says that the bowie knife story which T. S. refers to, was more ludicrous than terrible. Mr. Gould, it appears, was travelling on a railway with two young gentlemen, his friends, who were "fresh," says Mr. Gould, which we interpret "drunk." So fresh, or so drunk, were these gentlemen that they persisted in roaring certain negro melodies, beating time with their feet and hands, while other passengers (it being night), were endeavouring to confine themselves to sleep. At length, one of the peaceable passengers expostulated with Mr. Gould's fresh friends. A fight ensued, which terminated in favour of Mr. Gould's party, when a backwoodsman, recognising one of the noisy ones for a friend, drew a bowie knife in his defence.

CHRISTMAS DAY AND NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

THROUGHOUT Scotland, and also in Northumberland, Durham, and some of the adjoining counties, Christmas Day is not observed to the same extent as it is in the southern parts of this island; which may be accounted for by the difference in the origin of the early population of those districts. In the north, however, about three weeks before Christmas, the village wail—for he mostly peripatetic his part single-handed—starts forth with his fiddle and his lantern, and, seating himself in front of the various houses, plays, in his marvellous way, such tunes as have been previously selected by the inhabitants. Occasionally, however, he will play some ancient border tune with considerable taste and feeling. Nothing could well be more lonely than this solitary progress of the wail during the dead of the night, in places where there are neither watchmen nor lighted roads. The kind feelings of many who are thus serenaded will frequently induce them to throw a garment hastily about them and to sally forth, in spite of the cold, with a dram for the refreshment of the ancient minstrel, who, at the finish of each tune, salutes the people of the house, in as loud a voice as he can command, with, "Good morning, Mr. —, Good morning, Mrs. —, Good morning all the family, in the name of God." In due time he wishes them a merry Christmas, when he is generally well remembered for his midnight music.

In Northumberland, a short period before Christmas, huge spiced loaves are made, and little cakes are fashioned after the shape of a child, with the arms crossed over each other; this is called a "jule doe," and was evidently originally intended as an effigy of the infant Saviour. These cakes are given to children, and intimate friends present them to each other.

Another most picturesque custom in the mining districts which used to be more general than at present is the sword dance. At the approach of Christmas, bands of pitmen, each numbering about fifteen, join together. Each man is clad in a white shirt, which he wears over his waistcoat, decked with numerous ribbons and streamers of the most gaudy colours; their hats are decorated in the same manner, and each individual carries with him a sword or foil. Two of the company are attired differently, and are styled the "Tommy and Bessy." The Tommy is often clad in the skin of some animal, the tail of which hangs down behind; he also at times wears a skin cap, and is altogether so disguised as to present a somewhat "hirsute" appearance. The dress of the Bessy is equally grotesque. The party is accompanied by a fiddler and an individual who carries a gun, which he fires off whenever a donation is made to the party sufficiently liberal to be entitled to that honour. The duties of the Tommy are to summon the sword dancers at the commencement of each performance by a rude kind of song, during the singing of which the fiddler strikes up an accompaniment. The song in question runs somewhat as follows:—

TOMMY.

"The first that I call on, he is a squire's son;
He cannot wed his love because he is too young."

1ST SWORD-DANCER—the supposed "Squire's son"—

"Although I am too young, I've money for to rove,
And I will spend it all before I lose my love."

After uttering this praiseworthy sentiment, he stands out from the crowd,

TOMMY.

"The next that I call on he is a tailor fine;
What think you of his work, he made this coat of mine?"

This reference to the hirsute coat is a never-failing source of merriment. The tailor then replies in a somewhat similar strain, and in due time the remainder of the dancers are called out, and place themselves, sword in hand, in a circle. Still preserving the circle, they proceed to march round, following each other much in the same manner as the American Indians do at the commencement of a war-dance. At times the swords are held high overhead in one hand; at others, while the hilt is kept in the right hand, the blades are bent to a rainbow form with the left; then the swords are crossed as if in combat. The dance, after undergoing several variations, now appears to increase in fury, and at the end of it, by a sort of interlacing or weaving together of the swords, they are formed into a mass somewhat resembling the shape of a Greek cross, and are carried to the centre of the circle by one dancer (the "Squire's son"); the rest jump round for a time unarmed, after which each draws forth his own weapon from the bundle, and thus the exhibition terminates. In the meanwhile, the Tommy and Bessy have been playing all manner of antics; and, in the manner of "My Lord and Lady" who attend upon "Jack-in-the-Box," have been collecting as much money as they could from the spectators. The sword-dancers make a round to the houses of the gentry, and to the various farm-houses near, and frequently visit the neighbouring large towns. A few years ago they seldom failed of obtaining a welcome. They little think that they are celebrating an observance as old, if not older, than the Roman occupation of Britain sixteen or seventeen centuries ago, and which has been traditionally handed down from one generation to another since that far distant time.

On New Year's Day, twenty-five or thirty years ago, if the fire of a house had gone out, or the tinder-box got damp, or the brimstone matches had been forgotten, it would have been no easy matter to have obtained a light even from a neighbour, for it was considered, and still is by many living in those parts, most unlucky to lend fire on a New Year's Day. This is a doubt a remnant of that ancient custom of allowing the fires to go out at the termination of the year, and of then applying for their renewal, after various ceremonies and payment of fees, to the Druidical priesthood. It would, of course, in those days have been considered far more dishonest to



MARKETING AT CHRISTMAS TIME.—DRAWN BY F. HALL.

cheat the priest than at the present time to defraud the Commissioners of Income Tax.

In the neighbourhood of Newcastle-on-Tyne and the places adjacent, the New Year is ushered in by the ringing of the church bells, bands of music parade the streets, and in many houses the large spice loaf is placed, with a due allowance of cheese, and numerous dram-glasses, and bottles of strong rum, whiskey, &c., in the centre of a round table. A real north country fire is kept blazing. After these preparations a portion of the family pretend to retire to rest. The young men, however, if there are

any in the household, start forth, each well wrapped up in a great coat, with a couple of large pockets, in one of which he stows away a bottle of spirits, and in the other huge slices of the spiced loaf. Their object is to be "first-foot" to their sweethearts and friends, for it is considered that the success which is likely to attend the coming year very much depends upon the party who first crosses the threshold. As we have already mentioned in another article, a female is not considered lucky as a first-foot, neither is any male that may happen to squint. It is moreover unlucky to call "empty handed" after the clock strikes twelve.

All the doors are carefully barred, and notwithstanding the preparations which have been made, the young ladies have retired, but are soon roused by a knocking at the door, when they are so flurried that they rise and make a very hasty toilet, often forgetting to remove their nightcaps, and on learning that the applicant for admission is an eligible and lucky first-foot, the door is flung wide open, and the welcome guest admitted. After sundry congratulations and many wishes for a happy new year—and some laughing and a good deal of kissing—he produces his bottle, the contents of which old and young must taste, he himself not being allowed to escape from partaking largely of



THE RAFFLE FOR THE CHRISTMAS GOOSE.—(DRAWN BY J. PALMER.)



A COUNTRY CHURCH ON THE MORNING OF CHRISTMAS DAY.—(DRAWN BY J. BROWN.)

the hospitalities of his hosts—so that it frequently happens that a young and lucky first foot is in a considerable state of uncertainty long before day-light breaks, as to whether the year is young or old.

At Christmastide in the pit districts "guisers," or boys who have dressed themselves out with strange masks, to render themselves as awful-looking objects as possible, proceed at night, carrying turnip-lanterns suspended on poles, and call at the neighbouring farm-houses for the purpose of collecting what money they can. The writer of this notice

has often met with these unearthly-looking groups in wild places, sometimes relieved on a hill-top by the light of the moon or of the blazing pit fires, and he has endeavoured to convey some idea of this Christmas scene in the annexed engraving.



GUISTERS AT CHRISTMAS TIME IN THE MINING DISTRICTS.—(DRAWN BY J. BROWN.)

DEATH OF FATHER MATHEW.

AT Queenstown, on the 18th inst., the "Apostle of Temperance" breathed his last. On the 12th his funeral took place at Cork, and was perhaps the most remarkable ever witnessed in that city. The cortege was more than three miles long, and took an hour and a half to pass any particular point. It was attended by the corporation and city officers, in mourning, by several dignitaries and clergymen of the Established Church, as well as by a great number of the Roman Catholic clergy, with their Bishop at their head, and by all the Roman Catholics and a great many of the Protestant gentry of the surrounding country. It was estimated that not fewer than 50,000 people were assembled in and around the cemetery on this occasion; and the deepest sympathy was expressed by the greater number of those present, many of them shedding tears. The Roman Catholic Bishop and seventy priests officiated at the obsequies in the Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity.

The name of Father Mathew is associated with so remarkable a chapter in the social history of our times, that we cannot allow his decease to pass without notice. The influence he exercised for a time was marvellous, and the change he effected in the habits of the Irish people was little short of a miracle. Although much of the good he effected did not last, and although the enthusiasm he created died away, still he raised the popular opinion of Irishmen against drunkenness, which was the besetting vice of their country; and under his auspices many attempts at improving the social condition of the Irish working classes were begun.

Theobald Mathew was born on the 18th of October, 1790, at Tipperary. He was son of James Mathew, of that place, and his grandmother was niece of the celebrated General Mathew, of whom honourable mention is made by Sheridan, in his "Late of Swift," and his ancestors trace right back to the ancient kings of Wales. At an early age Theobald Mathew lost his parents, but was adopted by his distant relative, the Lady Elizabeth Mathew, who placed him under the tuition of the parish priest of Tallagh, county of Waterford. At the age of thirteen he was sent to the law academy of Kilkenny, whence he was removed in his twentieth year to Maynooth to pursue his ecclesiastical studies, having shown signs of a clerical vocation. On Easter Sunday, 1814, he was ordained in Dublin by the late Archbishop Murray. After some time he returned to Kilkenny, with the intention of joining the mission of two Capuchin friars there—but before long he removed to Cork. By a rescript from the late Pope, Gregory XVI., he received the degree of Doctor in Divinity, together with a dispensation allowing him to possess property. From the moment of entering upon his missionary duties at Cork, he began to show the sterling worth of his character. Ever diligent in his work of the pulpit, the confessional, and the sick man's bedside, he devoted all his spare time, not to violent agitation, but to the temporal and spiritual wants of the poor, to whom he acted as counsellor, friend, treasurer, and executor. When he undertook the great cause of temperance, these qualities stood him in good stead, and his immense successes may be attributed more to his affability of manner and generous nature, than to any higher cause.

At this time, as we have hinted, the great and crying evil in Ireland was the degrading habit of drunkenness, and so far had this vice extended in the southern and western parts of the sister isle, that the Mayor of Limerick, on one occasion, declared that nearly 80 out of 150 suicides within the past year had been traceable to intoxication. Some members of the Society of Friends were the first who endeavoured to mend this state of things, so far as concerned the city of Cork. Finding, however, that they made but little or no progress in arresting the march of drunkenness, early in the year 1838 they applied to Father Mathew for his advice and assistance. Setting aside his own peculiar views and opinions as a Roman Catholic priest, he readily joined his Protestant friends, and threw himself heart and soul into the work of forming a Temperance or Total Abstinence Association. For a year and a-half he found that his efforts made but little way; when suddenly the conversion of some notorious drunkards in Cork spread far and wide his fame among the excitable and enthusiastic people of Cork, Kerry, and Limerick. By the close of the summer of 1839, the agitation began to spread, and during that autumn, in his progress through Ireland, Father Mathew had the happiness of witnessing the success of his efforts, several hundred thousand of his countrymen having taken the pledge at his hands. Some idea of his success may be formed when we state that at Nenagh 20,000 persons are said to have taken the pledge in one day; 100,000 at Galway in two days; in Loughrea, 80,000 in two days; between that and Portlaoine, from 150,000 to 200,000; and in Dublin, about 70,000 during five days. There are few towns in Ireland which Father Mathew did not visit with like success.

While pursuing his career Father Mathew did vast good according to his means, and won the regard of the most adverse classes in Ireland. Colonel Blacker, the gallant chief of the Armagh Orangemen, and author of some most spirited Protestant ballads, wrote a song in honour of the Romish Friar. When he came to England in 1844, his simple, kindly demeanour was much admired in our most refined circles; and it is a fact that his quiet, good breeding made a most favourable impression on more than one of the patronesses of Almshouses, who met him at the table of an illustrious member of the Upper House.

At the same time he was received with enthusiasm in London and several of the manufacturing towns, more especially in Liverpool, where he counted his converts by thousands. The death of his early friend and patroness, Lady Elizabeth Mathew, which happened in 1842, deprived him of a great portion of his resources, inasmuch as she bequeathed her property, a considerable portion of which had been, up to that time, at his disposal, to a foreigner and an utter stranger. By his advocacy of the total abstinence cause, Father Mathew not only brought to ruin his brother, who owned a large distillery in the South of Ireland, but lost what remained of his own patrimony, thus proving the disinterested character of his crusade against intoxicating drinks. Her Majesty, at the instance of Sir Robert Peel, conferred upon him a pension of £300 a year.

THE GREAT GOLD ROBBERY.

ON Saturday, Burgess, Pierce, and Tester were again placed at the bar at the Mansion House. Mr. Bodkin again appeared for the prosecution, Mr. Woulton for Pierce, Mr. Lewis for Burgess, and Mr. Buchanan, assisted by Mr. Beard, for Tester.

The first witness called was Mr. George Douglas Hazel, who said he was inspector of police on the South-Eastern Railway. He was at Folkestone in the early part of 1855. He knew Pierce and Agar. He saw them together at Folkestone Harbour, he believed, in the month of May. He first saw them on the pier immediately after the arrival of the tidal service train. A man named Jones was the guard of the train. When Pierce and Agar were on the pier they were looking at the luggage which was being shipped. It took about a quarter of an hour to ship the luggage. The two men were in company and were speaking to each other. When they left they went towards the town. He knew Pierce as having been on the line, and had reason for noticing him more than an ordinary person. He frequently saw the men together. One generally walked before the other until they arrived on the pier, when they joined each other. They were always there on the arrival and departure of the steamboats. He had seen them speaking to each other ten or a dozen times. In consequence of what he observed, he caused a communication to be made to Mr. Steers, the superintendent of police at Folkestone. In October, he saw Agar at Folkestone Harbour-station. When he first saw him he was alone. He came to the harbour-station and went into the booking-office, where he remained a quarter of an hour. Witness watched him during that time, and saw him go and peep round a corner, where a person named Sharman was making up his money. On the following morning he saw Agar alone on the pier when the boat was leaving. Immediately afterwards he was joined by Tester. They spoke to each other, and walked in the direction of the Pavilion Hotel, and then witness lost sight of them. They were in his sight about ten minutes after Agar met Tester. They appeared to be on very friendly terms. Tester went up that evening by the 7-30 train. He did not remember seeing Agar after Tester left. Witness was spoken to by Mr. Sharman about a money parcel Agar had been inquiring for. Agar went by the name of Adams at Folkestone. Sharman said he thought Agar was a respectable man, but nevertheless witness kept his eye upon him. He had strong suspicions of him. When he saw Agar peeping round the corner at Sharman counting the money, he did not take him into custody, because he did not think he had sufficient justification for such a course.

Mr. Wretter Clerk said he kept the Rose Inn, Dover. Knew Burgess, but not the other prisoners, or Agar. He remembered two men with a guard coming to his house in the spring of last year. Tester resembled one of the men, but he could not positively swear.

Mr. Robert Clark said he was waiter at the Dover Castle Hotel, Dover. He went there about April, 1855. He remembered two men coming there one night two or three weeks after he went there; it was about eleven o'clock at night. One was a short person, with light complexion; the other he could not recollect, but he was taller. He thought they had cloaks on; he thought they had two bags with them. They said they were going by the two o'clock train—two o'clock in the morning. They left in time to catch that train.

Cross-examined by Mr. Lewis—Perhaps he might have a short memory—some people said he had. His memory was refreshed on this matter about a month ago, when two men called upon him. He did not recollect who they were. Since that time he had made a statement to Mr. Roes, the solicitor of the company. He remembered the men coming to the Dover Castle, because he put some brandy in a soda-water bottle for them. He had no means whatever of fixing the date, and did not know whether it was at Christmas or in April. He did not know whether they had cloaks or coats on—he did not know how they were dressed. He could not identify either of the men. He was in that Court on a former occasion, when Mr. Roes asked him whether he could identify either of the prisoners. He told Mr. Roes that he could not recognise them.

Mr. Henry Williams, a booking clerk in the company's service at Dover, said he was a night watchman in the early part of last year. He remembered the robbery of gold on the line, as he was on duty the night the robbery took place. The train came into Dover about eleven o'clock. Burgess and Kennedy were the guards, and at that time witness was in the booking office. A train went up at two o'clock. Only two passengers were booked by that

train. They went first class. There was no second class. The two men took their tickets, and paid in the ordinary way. About ten minutes before three two men took their places two other men went through the office. They were together. They did not take tickets, but passed through the office on to the platform. At that time Burgess and Kennedy were in the office talking to witness. All three (Burgess, Kennedy, and witness) turned round to look at the persons thus passing through. One was a light-complexioned man, the other dark, and one was taller than the other. Each one had a bag in his hand. They were met at the door by a porter named Witherden, who spoke to them. He saw nothing more of them after that. He did not remember how many persons went up by train the previous night, or the next night, or any other night.

Joseph Witherden, a porter of the company, stationed at Dover, said he was on duty when the train upon which the robbery was committed reached Dover. He saw the train unloaded. There a "goodish" quantity of luggage. Burgess and Kennedy were the guards. He remained on duty until the two o'clock up train started. Two men went up by that train. Witness first saw them in the booking-office. They had cloaks on, and each had a bag in his hand. One of the men was taller than the other. They did not go to the counter, but passed through the office to the place where he was standing. He offered to take their luggage, but they would not allow him to do so. He showed them to a carriage, into which they went, taking their bags with them. From the manner in which they carried their bags they seemed to be heavy. When they were in the carriage, witness spoke to them about their tickets, and they showed him two blue first-class tickets. He made no objections to the tickets, and he received a shilling from the men.

Matthew Wood, one of the Company's police officer at London, said he remembered hearing of the gold robbery in 1855. The following morning he was on duty as porter. The two o'clock train from Dover arrived in London at half-past four. He did not think there were more than four passengers. He opened the doors of one compartment, and let out two passengers. There were no others in that compartment. One of them, to whom he spoke, had a bag in his hand. He did not remember whether the other had anything in his hand or not. The one he spoke to had a loose cape on, but he did not notice the dress of the other so much. He offered to get a cab for them, but they declined. They walked down the platform towards the street, but he did not notice whether they took a cab or not. The man who carried the bag did not seem to be troubled much by its weight. The man he spoke to had dark hair and dark whiskers. (This would seem to be Pierce, who wore a black wig.)

Stephen Jones, a guard on the South-Eastern Railway, said he knew Burgess, Pierce, and Tester. He was guard of the 7-30 up train from Dover, in May, 1855. He knew Tester. On the arrival of the train at Regent one evening he saw Tester on the up platform, and he went up by the train in a first class carriage to London. He had a black leather bag with him about a foot or fifteen inches long. A guard commonly remained on a train a month. Witness was guard on the train during April and May. That was arranged in the superintendent's office, in which Tester was a clerk. It was between the 1st of May and the time at which he heard of the robbery of the gold that he saw Tester at Regent. On one or two previous occasions, in the early part of May, Tester came up to London by the train from Regent, but he could not remember whether or not he had anything with him. On the occasion on which Tester had the bag he took it into the carriage with him.

Mr. Frederick Russell said he was a clerk at the London station of the Greenwich Railway. He knew Tester. In May, 1855, he remembered Tester coming to his office about ten minutes past ten o'clock at night. The 7-30 Dover train arrived at the London station at five minutes past ten. Tester, who lived at Lewisham, as did witness, came to the ticket window and asked him whether he was going home by the next train, the 10-20, and witness said he was. Tester said he had been to Redhill and back since office hours. Witness remarked that it was sharp work. Tester appeared rather excited. He opened the door and brought in a black bag, which he stood in the office near the fire-place. He then went out, and while he was away Pierce, a watchman, came and asked whose bag it was; witness told him it was Tester's. The bag was nearly new, and was from fifteen to eighteen inches long. When Tester came back he took his bag, and told witness he would join him at the carriage. They went down together, but witness did not recollect whether he had his bag with him after he took it from the office.

John Perry, a night policeman at the London end of the Greenwich railway, remembered seeing Tester at the station as described by the last witness. Three or four days afterwards he heard of the robbery. He lifted the bag while Tester was away, in order to get at a box he wanted, and it felt lumpy and heavy. He made a remark to that effect to Mr. Russell. Directly he read Agar's evidence before the court, he said to Mr. Russell that he could not believe the bag contained the gold which Tester was said to have brought from Redhill.

Mr. J. P. Knight, superintendent of the South-Eastern Railway.—In May, 1855, Tester was clerk under him in the superintendent's office. Finnigan was a deputy superintendent, and he ceased in April, 1855, to regulate guards. The duty was then entrusted to Tester, who, in marking out the rota for April, added "and May." This was written in presence of witness, who observed that it was irregular. Tester answered that it was of no consequence. Burgess was thus made guard of the same train for two consecutive months.

Mr. Edward Latta Francis said he was partner in the firm of Edgington and Company, Duke Street, London Bridge. He knew of no exchange of 600 sovereigns for Bank notes for that sum on the 25th of March, 1855. Such a thing could not have taken place without his knowing it.

Mr. Bodkin then asked for a remand, as the prosecution was still pursuing their inquiries, and further evidence might turn up. At the same time, they (the prosecution) were quite ready to send this case for trial as it stood. The prisoners were then remanded.

EXECUTION OF MARLEY

ROBERT MARLEY, alias Joseph Jenkins, was executed, in front of the Old Bailey, on Monday morning.

At five o'clock Marley rose, and having dressed, took his breakfast, and entered freely into conversation with the officers who had charge of him. At a few minutes before eight the Sheriffs and the Under-Sheriffs entered the cell, where they found Marley standing up in a state of apparent unconcern. Mr. Sheriff Mechi asked him whether he had made his peace with God, and whether he was prepared to meet his fate. Marley replied that he hoped so. Mr. Under-Sheriff Anderson inquired whether he wished any of his friends to be communicated with, and he said he did not—that he had seen his sister, and did not desire to see any one else.

Mr. Davis, addressing Mr. Sheriff Mechi, said Marley had requested him to state that he very much regretted Cope's death—that he was perfectly satisfied with the judge and jury who tried him—that he admitted the justice of his sentence, and had to thank all the officials for the kindness he had received since he had been in the prison.

A few moments of silence followed, during which Marley stood erect, and without betraying the slightest emotion. Calcraft, the executioner, was then introduced, and Marley was bound with straps, in order to prevent a recurrence of the terrible scene which was enacted on the occasion of the execution of Bousfield a few months ago. When this was completed the chaplain commenced the burial service, and a procession which had been formed moved towards the scaffold. On Marley's appearance there was an unusual amount of yelling from the crowd; but he was quite unmoved by it. The rope was placed round his neck, the box was drawn, and he died instantaneously.

Marley and his companions formed a small but desperate gang of London thieves, all of whom some years ago enlisted in the 7th Dragoon Guards, and very soon made that regiment notorious for extraordinary robberies, wherever it was quartered. This gang consisted of five members—Marley, Jackson, Lotherington, Cox, and another. Marley himself deserted in November or December, 1850, immediately after a robbery, which has since been attributed to him and his accomplices. The room of the president of the mess was broken into, and a quantity of valuable property stolen. Cox deserted about the same time. Jackson was transported for breaking into an officer's room on Christmas night of the same year (1850); and Lotherington, for a robbery committed on the same night, was flogged, and then drummed out of the regiment. The whole gang being thus got rid of, the regiment recovered from the discredit which they had temporarily brought upon it.

THE DOVER MURDERS.

Two true bills for murder against Dedee Redanias were returned at Maidstone, on Tuesday, and he was placed at the bar to plead.

The prisoner was first arraigned upon the charge of the wilful murder of Caroline Back. To this charge the prisoner pleaded guilty. He was then charged upon a second indictment with the wilful murder of Maria Back. To the second indictment the prisoner pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Baron Bramwell directed the interpreter to inform the prisoner that the effect of his pleading guilty to the first charge would be, that the law would compel him to pass upon him the sentence of being hanged by the neck until he was dead.

The prisoner, who appeared in a dreadfully nervous and excited state, after the observations of the Learned Judge had been explained to him, persisted in pleading guilty to the charge of wilful murder upon Caroline Back.

His Lordship deferred passing sentence upon the prisoner.

ALGERIA.—Mr. H. Blackburn delivered an interesting lecture on Algeria, on Tuesday evening, in St. Martin's Hall. The lecture was of a rather dramatic character, being delivered in Moorish attire, and illustrated by a series of drawings exhibiting the costume of the different races of Algeria, and the general aspect of the country. Mr. Blackburn's description of life among the Arabs, their mode of travelling, their religious ceremonies, &c., &c., was very interesting. The position of the French in Algeria, he says, depends solely on the sword, and that the Kabyles anxiously await an opportunity to rise. The lecture was for the benefit of the Strangers' Home at Limehouse.

ARRIVAL OF THE RESOLUTE.

HER MAJESTY'S VISIT TO THE SHIP.

THE *Resolute*, in charge of Commander H. J. Harlstein of the United States Navy, anchored on Friday week at Spithead, amidst a storm of thunder, lightning, and rain. The weather was so foul that communication with the shore on the part of her officers was impossible. The Mayor and Corporation of Portsmouth, however, sent a message to the ship inviting the officers to a banquet. The *Resolute* arrived under the American ensign and pennant; after she anchored at Spithead, she hoisted the English white ensign alongside of the American. She has made a good passage, and arrived much sooner than was expected.

The *Resolute* had no sooner arrived, than her Majesty signified her desire to visit the ship, and it was accordingly towed down to Cowes—the Royal family being at Osborne. The visit was all the more interesting, inasmuch as, though the ship has been repaired and refitted, yet, as regards the arrangement of the furniture, and the situation of each particular article, the Queen saw the captain's cabin, &c., &c., in the precise state in which it was when the crew forsook the ship. In fact, the ship is—so to express it—a floating Pompeii, and everything comes to light just as it was left. Captain Keillett's epaulettes are lying in a tin-box on the table. Lieutenant Pim's musical-box occupies its old place on the top of a "what-not." The "loves" of the various officers are in their respective recesses on the book-shelves. The portmanteau containing the officers' gratifications is thrown heedlessly on a chair. On the wall hangs the picture of a ballet-girl prounging—still for ever prounging on the tips of her toes; and, in a nookery of domestic comfort, a little kettle, that should be singing songs "full of family glee," does nothing of the kind, but sits upon a shelf, stove as cold as a stone, and as silent.

On Tuesday the *Resolute*, dressed in her colours, was lashed alongside of the Royal embarkation-place at Cowes. The English and American flags were flying at the peak; and as soon as the Queen set her foot on the deck, the Royal standard was hoisted at the main. The *Retribution* fired salute, the crews of several gun-boats lying in the roads "tossed" their oars, and the ship's company, standing on the rail, received her Majesty with three rounds of cheers.

Captain Harlstein received the Royal party at the gangway, and the officers, in full uniform, were grouped on either side. Several American gentlemen of position who were on board were presented by Captain Harlstein, who then addressed her Majesty in the following words:—"Allow me to welcome your Majesty on board the *Resolute*; and, in obedience to the wish of my countrymen and of the President of the United States, to restore her to you, not only as an evidence of a friendly feeling to your Sovereignty, but as a token of love, admiration, and respect to your Majesty personally."

The Queen seemed pleased by the simplicity of this sailor-like address, and replied, with a gracious smile, "I thank you, Sir."

The Royal party then went over the ship and examined her with manifest interest. Captain Harlstein traced her course on a map and indicated the most important discoveries of the American Arctic expeditions. After completing the inspection, the Royal party retired amid the enthusiastic acclamations of the spectators.

Captain Harlstein was invited by the Queen to dine and to spend the night at Osborne, and all the officers were invited to visit the grounds, a privilege of which they availed themselves. The *Resolute* returned to Portsmouth on Wednesday morning to go into dock. A representation of the ship will be engraved next week, when we shall also give some particulars as to her history.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE length of Mr. THOMAS WRIGHT's letter on "Modern Antiquities" compels us to postpone its publication till next week.

ERRATA.—We are informed that we were in error, last week, in ascribing the erection of the Montrose Suspension-bridge to the late Mr. Rendel. The bridge was designed by Sir Samuel Brown, it appears, and built under his superintendence.—In the biographical sketch of the King of Prussia, who appeared in No. 84 (for Dec. 6), the date of his Majesty's birth was misprinted: for 1813, read 1795.

ILLUSTRATED TIMES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1856.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

THE week has brought missives of importance both from East and West. From the East, we have heard of the declaration of war against Persia, and that England is opening a campaign in a region of which she knows nothing, and in a cause of which she knows as little. That is no agreeable news for Christmas. From the West, we have the long, heavy message of Pierce—all of which that is interesting to Englishmen we shall boil down into a few paragraphs.

The early part is an elaborate defence of the Slavery cause—as much so as if it had been written for a Virginian newspaper. Thank God, we are not concerned to answer him—this being a Yankee question. But it is worth noticing what his defence really shows. It shows that Slavery is so rooted in the States that it will never be torn up without convulsion; that it is clung to, as life and light, by strong and great parties; and that the contest, having gone so far, retreat on either side is impossible. This, we say, is clear, from the fact that a President writes about it in such a way. He expressly maintains, indeed, that it is the Slavery cause which is *naturally* vital—growing—and progressive—and that Abolitionism seeks aid from the Government and artificial force! This amounts, virtually, to an argument that Slavery suits the *genius* of the American people and institutions—an odd fact to reflect on, for we used to be told that it was a "blemish," a "scar," &c., of which everybody wanted to be rid if he could.

What the President says of the commercial increase, &c., of the States, is satisfactory, and will be more pleasant to English readers than his previous discourse. It was commerce, which—with the spiritual aid of the Church—abolished the old European serfdom; but the conditions of black serfdom and society are so different that we fear the increase of commerce only *complicates* the Yankee slave problem.

There is nothing to alarm Europe in the allusions to foreign affairs. The Central American matter is spoken of, as if as good as settled. There is a very proper anxiety expressed to get some "order" established on the Isthmus, and our readers know that we have often regarded that region as peculiarly belonging to Yankee care, and not one where we have any need—or much right—to interfere. Indeed, nothing but aggression in the West Indian islands is now likely to produce such a curse as hostilities between America and England would be.

The proposition for making *all* private property safe from capture on the sea in war is recommended by the President to the adoption of Europe. Abstractedly, nothing can be more humane or reasonable. We showed the other day that there were difficulties in the way, but we shall always be glad to discuss a proposal which tends *honestly* to peace among mankind. We shall have more pleasure in hearing this subject discussed in Parliament next session than the long-winded discourses we expect about "Herat."

SECRET DIPLOMACY.

Persians all apparatus—"I hate the Persian preparations,"—is, unless this journal is much mistaken, the natural exclamation with which to receive the Indian news. How is it that we never hear what we are about anywhere, till we are fully committed to the consequences? It is part of what is generally called our secret diplomacy; and on this text we have some views to deliver—not specially suggested by the Persian business only, but of general application.

We keep up, in foreign affairs, a system which does not exist in domestic ones. When any great domestic event is meditated—when a Corn Law is to come off—the public mind is prepared by direct information; then Parliament is solemnly informed, and we all know what we are about. But foreign affairs are always veiled in mystery. Even in explicit notices of them, little is told by Queen's speech or Minister's speech. Blue-books regarding them are delayed; and when they appear, are always seen to be "cooked." Nobody understands them thoroughly; for we see that professed students of them differ as to the truth—not of opinions, which are always disputable—but of facts. In short, they are mysteries, bugbears, vexatious, dangers, and what not; and fill the country with rumour and excitement to very little purpose. But, since the Russian war, this state of things is more dangerous than it was before. As a gun much fired requires less powder, latterly, for its charge, so a nation heated by war "goes off" more readily than it used to do. Secret diplomacy is a vast power to a Minister who has it entirely in his own hands for the accomplishment of his objects, and who makes an ill use of the enthusiasm of a generous people for his political advantage.

Of course, we don't argue that there ought to be a bulletin stuck every morning on the Nelson Column with a note of what is to be done that day by the Foreign Office. Every executive must have its inner organisation—its undisturbed power of self-action. This is a world in which everybody must trust somebody. But we do contend for some modification of the existing state of things, and, as a beginning, we think it would be highly useful if people generally—1st, urged domestic subjects more on Governments; and 2ndly, discountenanced agitation about so-called "foreign politics" more than they do. Kosuth, for example, virtually causes a great deal of secret diplomacy even while he attacks it. He keeps the ears of foreign Ministers awake to what is said here, and sets our Ministers trading for power on the excitement of the foreign Ministers. With all that, too, he does not advance his own cause much, since he never rouses the English to the pitch of fighting for his principles, though strengthening the diplomatists, who, as pretended representatives of England, can use the agitation as a bugbear. He furnishes our Palmerstons with a perpetual excuse at once for diplomatic workings and diplomatic secrecy—by enabling them to plead the necessity of care, watchfulness, &c., &c. The result of the whole is, that there is a perpetual *summer* (so to speak) in Europe—a degree of ebullition just sufficient to distract us from home affairs, and not sufficient to make us achieve great things abroad. And while the public fancy they are effecting wonders for freedom, they are really helping nobody but the Minister. They fancy they are playing the organ, when they are only blowing the bellows. It would make a good "cut" for "Punch," if "Punch" were not so systematically dull—Pam. sitting at the organ, and Bull working away. The best of it is, too, that Bull thinks he is producing something like the "Marseillaise," while the knowing old performer is at the old tune of "God save the Emperor." It is Bull's ignorant zeal that at once makes his own rulers "use" him, and excites false hopes in the breast of foreign nations.

The Whig diplomacy of 1848 caused half the failures of Italy, and the murder of Cicerovachio was partly due to Minto's civilities to him. Our ships were everywhere—helping liberty nowhere, after all our talk—and doing nothing but give shelter to such of our wandering blockheads as were afraid of shot and barricades. Surely it is time that we checked this nonsense, which produces nothing but mischief. God knows, we would willingly hang Bomba to-morrow, if we could—but we are above putting diplomatic thistles in his bed, which is what our foreign Ministers do.

How did our diplomacy acquit itself in the Russian matter? It landed us unprepared in war? It kept on shuffling a long summer through till the cholera got among our troops; and it finally failed us just in time for us to land an army unprovided for in the face of winter. Our old Eastern diplomatic establishment had found out nothing worth knowing about the great Russian position in its neighbourhood. We venture to say that the *Times* correspondents—one in St. Petersburg and the other in Constantinople—would have foreseen and announced the whole events which produced that war long before; and by announcing them, would have provoked a demonstration in England that would have kept the Czar quiet. Indeed, it was because our diplomatists had so often humbugged us before, that we were all so slow to believe that real danger had come at last, which slowness had well known effects on the events that follow.

Our explanation of the pottering, mischief-making, busy-boddy foreign policy of England is not generally printed out. Our statesmen are mostly far too fine fellows to be content with the small work they are allowed to do at home. They are above education and sanitary measures—they despise the Australian trade—they will not get rid of the convicts. That kind of work a man like Palmerston considers *bourgeois*. It is far finer work—squaring up at a Bourbon, or terrifying Von Somebody of Austria, a minister of the Emperor's. That is dignified, and you can round periods when you are talking about it. Now, at home, you can act no such great figure; you may be useful, if you please—which is troublesome—but, as a general rule, the country wishes itself left alone. There is a popular notion that the less Government meddles with anything, the more it prospers. Indeed, we know no modern notion more universal. Baffled here, an active mind resorts to foreign parts for occupation; and strange it is, that the English, who are morbidly impatient of Government interference with their affairs at home, are so willing to let Government interfere so much abroad. They forget that the consequences must fall back on them some day; and, indeed, we seem likely to have plenty of them as the years advance.

ELECTION INTELLIGENCE.—Mr. Rolt's resignation has placed the electors of Greenwich in a dilemma—a candidate is wanting. A Kentish journal intimates that the extraordinary "expenses" of canvassing this borough furnish the reason for this unusual state of things.—Should Mr. Collin, as anticipated, retire from Cardiff, Colonel J. F. D. C. Stuart offers himself to the electors, and promises to give a hearty support to Lord Palmerston.—Mr. Bernhard Samuelson, the well-known ironmaster and agricultural implement maker, will become a candidate for Banbury, in the event of Mr. Tancred's resignation.—Lord Elcho has intimated to his constituents in East Lothian that he has been ordered by his medical adviser to abstain from all business for the next twelve months, and that he is about to proceed to the Continent in order to the re-establishment of his health. He regrets, therefore, the prospect of being absent during the next parliamentary session.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS

LIEUT.-COLONEL JACOB, of the Bombay Artillery, the author of the rifle shell is by this time, we learn, on his way through Sicily, in command of a small force, to assist the Africans in their resistance to the Persians.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL was offered the Chancellorship of the London University, and declined it.

A **BOILER EXPLODED**, last week, at Creswell and Sons' Ironworks, at Tipton, and six men and boys were seriously injured.

AS THE **STAMPER THORNTON** was on her passage from Cork to Kingston, with cattle, she encountered severe gales, and ran short of coals. To supply the deficiency, she consumed 150 pigs, which had died, in the furnaces, and by this means was able to reach her destination.

THE **SHEFFIELD TOWN COUNCIL** have resolved to present an address to the Queen, praying for a strict enforcement of the Treaty of Paris.

A **NEW POSTAL CONVENTION** has just been concluded with France, and will come into operation on the 1st of January next.

GOVERNMENT has concluded to send a commission forthwith to Aberdeen, to make inquiries with a view to the union of the two Aberdeen Universities during the next session of Parliament.

EXPERIMENT HAVE BEEN MADE AT WOOLWICH with shells filled with melted iron. The result was proved to be considerably more certain and effectual than that produced by hot shot, and the supply furnished with much more readiness and facility from a melting crucible than from the heating furnace.

A **SOLDIER, NAMED LOCKY**, was found dead on a bastion at Malta on the 5th; he had been stabbed in the back. Another soldier, Scholefield, was fatally stabbed in the abdomen; his murderer was arrested.

ALGERES seems decidedly likely to become a favourite winter residence. Of English alone, more than sixty families have arrived there since the beginning of this winter, and lodgings have become scarce. Numerous mineral springs have been discovered.

MR. CORDEN has written another letter on Maritime Law, intended to correct a notion that we surrendered our belligerent rights in the late war from feelings of forbearance to Russia. He asserts that it was not so. It was the attitude assumed by the United States which led to the change.

THE **LONDON GENERAL OMNIBUS COMPANY** recently consented to a verdict for £400, as compensation to Mr. Cleghorn, a gentleman who was seriously hurt by the going way of an outside seat beside the driver while the omnibus was passing the Haymarket.

CHINESE EMIGRANTS are beginning to invade Algiers.

HER MAJESTY has conferred upon General Cannon, better known in the East as "Behram Pacha," the honorary rank of Lieutenant-General, a distinction gallantly earned and justly deserved.

AN **IRON STEAM-FRIGATE**, 216 feet long, is being constructed at East Boston (U.S.), for the Viceroy of Egypt.

THE **"WOMAN'S RIGHTS"** PARTY has been sitting in conference, at New York, and passing resolutions of the usual nature.

A **SOLDIER OF THE 11TH HUSSARS**, stationed at Canterbury, was sweeping out his horse's stall, when it kicked him on the head and crushed his death.

THE **CANALIAN PAPERS** are filled with the record of railway celebrations, in consequence of the opening of the Grand Trunk line. The enthusiasm all along that part of the line which has been opened was very great.

A **NEW LIGHTHOUSE** is immediately to be erected on the Smalls, off the coast of South Wales.

THE **DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE** has, it is said, decided to abolish the use of the carbine as a cavalry weapon.

DR. MACBRIDE has been elected an hebdomadal councillor for the University of Oxford, in the room of the late Professor Hussey, the Tractarian candidate, Mr. Wall, being defeated by a majority of eighteen votes.

THE **RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT** has empowered the authorities of the town of Odessa to raise a monument to the memory of the late Prince Woronzow, on a site opposite to that of the Duke of Richelieu.

THE **DISCONTENT WITH THE INCOME-TAX** is evidently increasing. Birmingham, Brighton, Reading, Southwark, Aylesbury, and Southampton, have held public meetings to advocate its repeal or amendment.

A **DRUNKEN WOMAN**, the wife of a factory operative, threw herself down a coal pit at Fuldge; she was, of course, killed.

AT THE **DONCASTER RAILWAY STATION**, a few days ago, no fewer than sixteen carriages had their handles wrenched off and carried away. The supposed thief is in custody.

THE **TOWN-COUNCIL OF GLASGOW** are now trying experiments to deodorise sewage and deposit its solid contents in tanks. Milk of lime is used as a precipitant; and success seems to have been attained.

FIVE FORGERIES have been discovered among the certificates of scrip sent in for registration to the offices of the Oriental Gas Company.

THE **NEW DEAN OF CARLISLE**, MR. CLOSE, received several presents before leaving Cheltenham—1750, a Bible, a silver tea-service—and an equal number of addresses from the donors, the inhabitants, the clergy, and the college students.

SOME BURGLARS broke into the library of the rectory-house at Stifford, near Grays, in Essex, ransacked the room, but got little booty. Probably enraged at this, they attempted to set fire to the house, but did not succeed.

THE **FITTING-OUT OF SLAVERS** at New York was never prosecuted with greater energy than at the present time, we hear.

AT THE **SALE OF THE MUSEUM OF THE LATE MR. YARRELL**, last week, an egg of the great auk was sold for £21. The bird is included in the British fauna, but has long been extinct.

THE **PUBLIC EXAMINATION** of the gentlemen cadets of the East India Company's Military College, Addiscombe, was held on Friday week. The cadet who carried off the Pollock medal, who was first in mathematics and military surveying, and second in good conduct, is John Herschel, son of the present Sir John Herschel. His father, now enfeebled by age and infirmity, was present, and naturally attracted much attention.

THE **DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE** reviewed the troops at Aldershot on Tuesday.

UPWARDS OF A HUNDRED THOUSAND PERSONS, it is computed, visited the Cattle Show this year.

REDDEATH'S HORSES HAVE BEEN SOLD AT TATTERSALL'S, by order of the assignees. A brown mare, a hack, fetched 32 guineas; two brown geldings, which had been driven together, were sold, one for 78, and the other for 75 guineas; a brown pony sold for 17 guineas.

THE **GIRL CLUB PRIZE** OF 20 GUINEAS, for the best glee, has again been awarded to MR. G. W. MARTIN. The Club met for the first time this season on Saturday week, at the Freemasons' Hall. The announcement of Mr. Martin's repeated success was received with much satisfaction by the members.

THE **SUCCESSOR TO THE REV. F. CLOSE**, at Cheltenham, is the Rev. W. R. Freemantle, vicar of Chyndon, Bucks.

THE **BISHOP OF LONDON** preached on Sunday, in the parish church of St. Anne's, Limehouse, in aid of the restoration of the structure.

THE **ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY** held their half-yearly meeting on Monday. An accession of 41 members since the last half-yearly meeting was announced. The Council have elected the Earl of Powis and M. E. Pope to occupy the vacancies in the Council.

AN **ENGLISH QUEEN'S MESSENGER** has been robbed of his despatches near Cattaro (Dalmatia).

ADMIRAL DUNDAS, commanding the Mediterranean squadron, has gone to Lisbon in the Wellington. The squadron remains off Malta, awaiting the solution of the Neapolitan affair.

THE **DOWAGER LADY RAGLAN** is about to erect a monument to the memory of her gallant husband, the late Commander-in-Chief of the army in the East, in the little church of Badminton, in Gloucestershire, where lie the remains of the General. A mural tablet is also to be erected to his memory in the Military Church in Birdcage Walk, St. James's Park.

MR. **RUSSEL GURNEY** was elected to the office of Recorder of the City of London on Tuesday.

A **PRISON VAN** proceeding from the Assize Court at Liverpool to Walton Jail, was suddenly brought to a standstill from one of the wheels taking fire. The van was filled with prisoners, two of whom had sentence of death recorded against them. The whole were detained until another van could be procured.

THE **QUEEN** will probably honour the Manchester Exhibition of next year with a visit. Prince Albert has expressed his intention of being present at the opening ceremonial.

THE **LARGE AMOUNT** OF £10,350,479 was paid last year on foreign and British spirits.

A **NEW LINE OF STEAMERS** is to run between Copenhagen, London, Hull, and Leith.

A **GERMAN BISHOP** (Roman Catholic) has issued a pastoral, forbidding sacred music, the words of which are used in the vernacular, to be sung in any cathedral or church.

JOHN HENRY COOKE, of Astley's, has been astonishing the natives in Yankee-land.

HATLEYBURY COLLEGE will cease to exist after Christmas, 1857. Future candidates will be appointed by open competitive examination.

THE LOUNGER AT THE CLUB.

WHAT has come to my friend the penny-a-liner? Formerly he was the truest and staunchest supporter of law and order, the darest of men, of transgressors, against whom he thundered forth the longest and loudest found in the dictionary, and a stiff upholder of the good old George. The Third hanging creed. Latterly, however, I find him much changed. I think he has become more commercial and calculating, and has discovered that to be conservative he must be short and pithy; so he has gone into the other line of business, and is now maudlin and sentimental when he has to discourse of criminals and their misdeeds. Notably so in this recent Marley case. It is now-a-days the proper thing that a bulletin of the health and physical and moral condition of the condemned should be issued in the week previous to the execution. So, last week, we had the penny-a-liner's description of Mr. Marley's state, from which we learned that the convict was good enough to acknowledge the justice of his sentence, to regret that he had killed his unfortunate victim, and to state that such had really never been his intention—that he had merely intended to render him incapable of resistance, and then wack off with the plunder. Further, the "liner" was graciously pleased to add that the fact of Mr. Marley's carrying a life-preserver could not be taken as evidence of his intention to murder, as such weapons were usually carried by persons of his class.

On the execution itself the "liner" has been equally grand, pulling out the old paragraphs and stereotyped phrases by wholesale, stating that the circumstances under which the murder was committed "would probably be fresh in the recollection of our readers," and then proceeding to detail them minutely. We also had interesting conversations between Mr. Sherid Mechi and the condemned, and Mr. Executioner Calcutt and his patient, when the former courteously inquired, in reference to the pinning straps, whether they hurt the wearer; and the latter replied, "Oh, dear, no!" Bah, penny-a-liner! Off, Doctor Fudger and Vamper; avoid, thou spinner out of melancholy ceremonies, and narrator of absurd and uninteresting conversations between dreary sheriffs and miserable culprits! It is enough for us to know, that the blood of the shedder of blood has itself been shed. Let such a notice appear in the "London Gazette," or some official organ, in some official form, but let us do away for ever with the slang of the press-yard and the scaffold. Let us have the "enormous gooseberry" and the "singular freak of nature" and the "fall of red snow," each in their proper season; but let us be spared the wretched details of the felon's behaviour in the condemned cell, or his conduct at the gibbet.

The certificates of Mr. Cuyler, the president of the Georgian Railway, and of Mr. E. Molyneux, the British consul, have, I should think, tolerably exploded the fictitiousness of Mr. Arrowsmith's story of "Railways and Revolvers in Georgia." You will also recollect that at the commencement of the affair, and immediately after the publication of Mr. Arrowsmith's letter, I doubted the credibility of the narrative, and stated in my *feuilleton*, that I had good authority for the opinion expressed. The "Times" now turns upon Mr. Arrowsmith for further testimonials, not only of veracity but of sanity, at the same time stating that they had received admirable vouchers as to Mr. Arrowsmith's respectability, from undoubted sources in Liverpool. The question has become a public one, and the names of these Liverpool gentry should be made public also.

The Sheepshanks donation has afforded a considerable amount of gossip to the art world. Mr. Sheepshanks, it is understood, has presented to the nation the whole of his collection of paintings and drawings, for the purpose of public instruction in art, on condition that some one responsible Minister—the Minister for Education—shall be responsible for the well-being and the good use to be made of the gift. So far so good; the present "Minister of Education" is, one would suppose, the President of the Council, and we would suppose that Mr. Sheepshanks would be satisfied with him. But there is a further stipulation before the "very fine collection, which is rich in the best works of Mulready, Landseer, and Leslie, and contains fine examples of the principal modern British painters in oil," is handed over to the nation, which is, that the pictures must be kept in the neighbourhood of their present locality at Kensington. The English people, partial to gifts, hate stipulations, and of course grumble at and find a motive for Mr. Sheepshanks's proviso. What they say is, that Mr. Sheepshanks is doing this simply with a view to carry favour with Prince Albert, whose partiality for the Kensington National Gallery scheme is well-known, and that his greatest ambition is a baronetcy. "Que sais-je?" I but repeat popular gossip, but if we ever do hear of "Sheepshanks, Bart.," your readers will be disposed to pin their faith more tightly on me than ever.

THE THEATRICAL LOUNGER.

I HAVE seen the "Cagot," and like him not. A five-act play, in blank verse, abounding in aggravated melodramatic situations, and filled with clap-trap conventionalisms, is not an inspiring thing to witness and listen to; and that the "Cagot" is one of this order, I must confess. It wants condensation as a melodrama, or elevation as a "play." The writing is turgid fastidious; the situations powerful, but struggled after, and by no means new; the agony is heavily filled up; but after our sympathies have been torn to shreds, there is no "carpenter's scene" in which we may be brought back to our proper level by the fun of the comic actor. Mr. Dillon himself acts well, and with much rugged force and pathos as the hero, and he is well seconded by Mrs. Weston, who played the "heavy leading business" well and earnestly. Miss Woolgar's part was utterly unsuited for her; indeed, so far as my present experience of the Lyceum goes, she is utterly wasted there. I have once before expressed my opinion of what Mr. Dillon had the power to do if he chose; and, in repeating that opinion, I must confess that he seems going to work on an entirely wrong principle. To be successful, a London theatre should have a *specialité*; Mr. Dillon appears to have a leaning towards the *dramas* of the Porte St. Martin, and to them he should confine himself if he wish to succeed. Let him play good melodrama, followed by a rattling farce, or an elegant comedy, and the theatre will be filled; but what can he expect when he plays two heavy pieces in one night, or revives the lively farce of the "Dead Shot," or dodges from "Othello" to the "King's Musqueteers?" This theatre has been open three months, and I believe on no single night has his name been out of the bill; but what of Miss Woolgar, Miss Wilton, and Mr. Toole? To none of these *artistes* has one fitting character been given! As an actor, Mr. Dillon has taken good rank in London; as a manager, he has yet very much to learn.

The managers of the various theatres are hard at work superintending the production of their Christmas novelties. At Drury Lane, pantomime rules, and Mr. E. L. Blanchard, the wonderful man who is supposed to live in a fairy palace guarded by dragons and waited on by big-headed slaves with deep voices, has concocted for the management a harlequinade entitled "See-saw Margery Daw; or, Harlequin Holiday, and the Island of Ups and Downs." In this pantomime there are to be introduced one hundred ballet girls; Mr. Beverley is to yield the most graceful treasures of his brush; and Mr. E. T. Smith's cheque-book is to be perpetually open; so that great things are expected of the combined result.

At the Lyceum, a combination of burlesque and pantomime will be produced, the former portion of the entertainment being written by Mr. William Brough, and the characters being sustained by Miss Woolgar, Mr. Buckingham White, Miss Wilton, Mr. Toole, Mr. Barrett, &c., and the harlequinade diction being supplied by Mr. Nelson Lee, with Tom Matthews for his principal henchman. The title is "Conrad and Medora," and the story is founded on the "Corsaire" plagiarism of Byron's tale.

The Adelphi Christmas entertainment will also be a combination of burlesque and pantomime, from the pen of Mr. Mark Lemon, and founded, I believe, on the story of Prince Wittekind.

At the Olympic Mr. Wigan will produce a burlesque, from the pen of Mr. Planche, with the title, "Young and Handsome."

The Haymarket pantomime has been written by Mr. Buckstone. The theme is the "Babes in the Wood."

At Sadler's Wells the old story of the "Fisherman and the Genii" has been turned into a pantomime; and at the Marylebone Theatre, which is to be opened under the management of Mr. Emery, the pantomime is to be called "Tit-tat-to, or, Harlequin News;" and the principal journals of the present day are to play the chief character in the opening.



A CHRISTMAS DANCE AT A



ILLUSTRATED PRESENT BOOKS

The Poets of the Nineteenth Century. Edited by Rev. R. W. LAMMOTT. Illustrated with One Hundred Engravings. London: Routledge and Co.

Rhymes and Roundelays in Praise of a Country Life. By Poets of Many Lands. Illustrated. London: Bogue.

The Book of Job. Illustrated by John Gilbert. London: Nisbet and Co.

The Course of Time. By ROBERT POLLOCK. Illustrated Edition. Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons.

The Sabbath, Sabbath Walks, and other Poems. By JAMES GRAHAME. Illustrated by Birket Foster. London: Nisbet and Co.

The Lord of the Isles. By Sir WALTER SCOTT, Bart. Illustrated by Birket Foster and John Gilbert. Edinburgh: A. and C. Black.

The Ladies of the Reformation. By the Rev. JAMES ANDERSON. Illustrated. Edinburgh: Blackie and Son.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. By S. T. COLERIDGE. Illustrated. London: Low and Co.

Fancies from the Greenwood. By LADY WALLACE. London: Bell and Daldy.

Ocean Gardens. By H. NOEL HUMPHREYS. London: Low and Co.

Sakuntala, or the Lost King. An Indian Drama. Translated from Sanskrit by MONIER WILLIAMS, M.A. Illustrated. Hertford: Austin.

Romance Anthology; or Selections of Romantic Poetry. By the Hon. HENRY STANLEY. Illustrated. Hertford: Austin.

THE Russian war, although it cost us thirty millions of money, did not last long enough to interfere seriously with the productive forces of this country. The demand even for articles of luxury underwent but a very slight modification, for people felt that the pinch was but temporary, and by no means such as to warrant their hastily practising an economy that everyone knew could not be otherwise than disagreeable. Why should the habits of a lifetime be given up merely because the Russians happened to covet Constantinople? The screw must be applied at a further point of pressure ere we can consent to forego our customary pleasures.

In times of severe commercial depression, the barometer of the book market has usually furnished a tolerably safe indication of the extent of the national distress, for new books are precisely the kind of luxuries which most people will first attempt to do without. During the war a stop was put generally upon the publication of expensive works; nevertheless, as regards the production of that class of books which our neighbours style *livres de luxe*, no particular falling off was noticeable. It is the commonly received opinion that a time of war cannot be otherwise than unfavourable to a full development of the arts of peace. Yet this doctrine hardly holds good when applied to the arts of design. It was when Italy was torn to pieces by contending armies, that the great Italian painters produced their immortal works; it was during the struggle between the rival factions of York and Lancaster that Gothic architecture in England attained its zenith; and it was not until a civil war raged throughout the length and breadth of this island, that we could manage to knock out from amongst us a native-born artist, with a genuine English cognomen.

It is true enough that war like any other vulgar evil—such as a failure of the wheat crop for instance, or even a potato blight—by partially checking the demand for objects of refinement and luxury, may interfere to some extent with the supply. But it affects art disadvantageously in no other way. Why, who believes if the fortune of war had installed our enemies, the Cossacks, as masters of London, and had stabled their horses in our ugly National Gallery, that Sir Edwin Landseer would not have painted portraits of their shaggy steeds, or that Mr. Grant would not have limned their own repulsive physiognomies, if favoured with the requisite Muscovite commissions? Mr. Mulready and Mr. Webster would in all probability have continued to choose their subjects from scenes of English domestic life, the same as Mr. Frost would still have painted those classic nymphs of his, which have not a single classic feature about them; but, who does not feel certain that Mr. Maclise would have given us at the next Academy Exhibition "The old Hittman harnessing for the fray," just for all the world as though the gentleman in question were the merest "middle age" knight? The portrait painters proper would have been in great request; and we can fancy some mongrel Muscovite from the banks of the Dnieper or the Don poring over the scale of prices exhibited on the walls of the studios, with the terms for full-length, half-length, and kit-cat, and shrugging his shoulders as the artist modestly calls attention to the little N.B. at the foot of the notice setting forth that one-third of the stipulated price was required to be paid down upon the nail at the first sitting.

At the close of the autumn of 1854, when Heaven only knew where we were drifting to, our London publishers sent forth their usual complement of illustrated and decorated books as presents for the coming Christmas season. A similar issue made its appearance last year. These facts prove how slightly the war interfered with the production of this class of works, and, if we may judge from the number of illustrated gift-books published during the present season—a tolerable indication of the kind of reception which those that preceded them must have met with—we may conclude that all were more or less successful. This annual issue of costly present books is peculiar to England, and the production of them has been carried to such a point of perfection, that we make bold to say *ten* such volumes as are now lying before us could not be matched by any other nation in the world. We are quite aware of what our German brethren have already done, and are now doing, in a similar way. We have seen their matchless edition of "Faust"—we are familiar with their Kunster Albums, their Illustrated Bible, their Niebelungenlied, and the host of imitative volumes which the latter work gave rise to. We admire the German school of art, with its severe style of drawing—we appreciate its sentiment, its energy, its simplicity, its earnestness, and its grace; but for a style of art that shall be intelligible to all degrees of intellect—that can charm, by the mere force of its variety, all tastes—that adapts itself equally well to the earnest evangelism of our sacred poets, and the graceful humour of our lighter writers—that expounds, as it were, the most delicate touches of sentiment, and delineates the nicest shades of character—that depicts natural scenes with a truth, a freshness, a vigour, and withal a refinement, that in no era of art was ever attained to before—the English school, as exhibited in book illustration, may be pronounced to have no equal.

And how many years shall we have to look back for the first English illustrated book, when the era of missals, and of the rude substitutes for those charming volumes, has entirely passed away? We do not mean such an illustrated book as the Strawberry Hill edition of Gray's "Elegy," nor a similar volume to the folio edition of Thomson's "Seasons," nor Boydell's "Shakespeare," nor the great "Bower Bible," nor Mr. Gally Knight's works on Architecture, nor Mr. Hope's on Furniture; nor even your forty-guinea volumes on such worthy subjects as the Coronation of Fum the Fourth. We mean an illustrated book, with the text and the designs forming, as it were, a part of each other, in body as well as in spirit—a volume that may be said to have given the tone to the present art of book illustration, and hardly looks antiquated even yet. It is not Bewick's "Birds" that we are alluding to, and which some people admire to that extent, as to see a beauty in every fault. Neither is it "Puckle's Club," with Mr. Thurston's highly-prized designs; nor the "Religious Emblems," with specimens of Luke Clennell's graver—poor Clennell, who, like many greater geniuses, ended his days in a madhouse. It is to neither of the above, but to the edition of Northcote's "Fables," illustrated by William Harvey, that we think the honour justly due. This book developed the varied talents of our English wood-engravers, and was the first advance beyond the limits of that antiquated style of art which had held both designers and engravers prisoners within its fetters. It is not so much for its own merits, as for the influence it had in advancing the art of book illustration, that the work we speak of deserves the greatest praise.

There can be no question but that Rogers's "Italy," with Stothard's and Turner's designs, was the first perfect illustrated book in the language, and even to this day there is no volume that can compare with it. In producing it, Mr. Rogers was merely carrying out on a more complete scale, and with a more refined perception, the idea he had already shadowed forth in the duodecimo edition of his poems, illustrated with copper-plate engravings, after Stothard's designs. This book had, of course, its host of imitators, all, however, falling miserably short of an original, which those who knew the care and labour bestowed upon it, and could properly appreciate the result, felt to be unapproachable.

We pass over the tribe of annuals without remark, as books with illus-

trations not embodied in the text, are not of the class of works under discussion; and the volume deserving of particular notice which next presents itself to our mind is the "Vicar of Wakefield," with Mulready's designs. This work is as perfect in its way as the "Italy." It is, indeed, a charming volume, and every design contained in it is a picture in miniature. As mere engravings, too, they are unequalled, while the printing of them—a most important element in works illustrated with woodcuts—was, so far as the first edition was concerned, certainly unsurpassable.

To attempt to enumerate the mass of illustrated books that have issued from the English press during the last fifteen years, is of course quite out of the question. Among the most remarkable of them may be mentioned the "Arabian Nights," with Harvey's designs; Knight's and Meadows's "Shakespeares;" Lockhart's "Spanish Ballads;" the "Book of British Ballads;" Thomson's "Seasons" and Goldsmith's "Poems," both illustrated by the Etching Club; the Abbotsford edition of the Waverley novels: "Poems and Pictures;" Milman's "Horace;" the "Pilgrim's Progress," with designs by Harvey; Moore's "Melodies," illustrated by Maclise; and Longfellow's "Evangeline," illustrated by Birket Foster and others. We make a pause at this work, for two reasons. The one is that Mr. Foster herein first unmistakably displayed those striking abilities as a draughtsman on wood, which are now so widely recognised, and which, to our thinking, place him at the top of the tree as the most picturesque, graceful, and versatile book-illustrator of the present day. The other reason is that the book appears to have served as the model to numerous successors; for although six years have elapsed since its publication, we can trace certain marks of resemblance to it in half of the works that head this notice. These are—in the tone of the paper on which these books are printed: in the style of binding; and in the fashion of quoting such passages of the poems as suggested the designs in the list of illustrations—a fashion which had its origin in the illustrated edition of "Evangeline," and was hardly worthy of being followed so extensively.

The "Evangeline" was succeeded by illustrated editions of Longfellow's other works, and by "Christmas with the Poets," all of which were indebted for their attractions to the delicacy, the spirit, and the marvellous variety of Mr. Birket Foster's pencil. These volumes achieved great successes, and Mr. Foster's aid was sought in conjunction with that of Mr. Gilbert to illustrate the poems of Sir Walter Scott in a similar style. One of the volumes of this series heads our notice, and will be more particularly alluded to presently. Gray's "Elegy," the "Vicar of Wakefield," and Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes," with Herbert's "Poems" and Cowper's "Task," were among the next issues from the art-press, the illustrations of the latter work being entirely from Mr. Foster's versatile pencil. Mr. Foster's etchings to Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" and Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," clever though they be, certainly fall short of his designs on wood. Of the multitude of books illustrated by Mr. Gilbert, Mackay's "Salamandrine" and Longfellow's "Poems" are the only two that call for special mention.

THE POETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, the first book on the list at the heading of this article, is a very pretentious-looking volume, but a careful examination of its contents shows that it bears out its pretensions to the utmost. It embraces well-selected examples from upwards of seventy of our modern poets, whose works are arranged in apparent, though not in strict chronological order, and is illustrated with no less than one hundred designs, many of which are elaborate compositions by artists of the highest repute as book illustrators. Millais, the painter of the "Order of Release," contributes a couple of drawings, the one illustrating the parting scene between the Maiden and the Youth in Byron's "Dream," the other the catastrophe in Coleridge's "Genevieve." The first design is as pure a bit of modern real life as has ever been essayed by a pre-Raphaelite painter, and is one of those subjects, which, the more they are studied, the more they become admired. The expression of the girl's face is something exquisite—the severity, for a moment disturbed by the agitated look of the youth—the calmness, yet, withal, the faint touch of anxiety which one can perceive pervading these delicate feminine features, are admirably expressed. There is a natural air, too, about the pose of the two figures, that is particularly charming. The unconventional style in which the drapery is treated, so broad, so simple, and so scrupulously painstaking, contrasts strikingly with the sloppy-mannered drapery of less conscientious artists. The other design exhibits great power, a daring originality in the mode of treatment, an earnestness, a passion, so to speak, that betokens the hand of a great artist, a simplicity—indeed a harshness of effect, that will hardly satisfy the meretricious tastes of the superficially learned. The other figure designs that we set the most store by, are, first, the one illustrative of the "Prisoner of Chillon," by F. M. Brown, which is very original and very clever, with some wonderful foreshortening in the drawing of the body of the dead youth. Secondly, two or three clever drawings by J. R. Clayton, the best of which, and a very admirable miniature picture it is, being that which illustrates Gerald Massey's "Wee White Rose." Thirdly, Mr. Tenniel's designs to "Rienzi" and the "Burning of Rokeby," the latter with a touch of grandeur about the treatment, although it occupies merely a space of four inches square; and lastly, Mr. Gilbert's "Hohenlieden," one of the finest subjects that has proceeded from his prolific pencil.

Among the landscape illustrations of the volume, those by Mr. Birket Foster claim our first notice. To our thinking, the best of them is the beautiful solitary woodland scene at the heading of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." So real—so solemn-looking is its calm solitude, that, though the picture is full of that marvellous elaboration of detail with which Mr. Foster enriches all his works, this does not in any way detract from its simple grandeur. Another beautiful picture is that prefixed to Charlotte Smith's "Lines on the Swallow," and a third illustrates Keble's "Lilies of the Field." There is a truth, a freedom, a lightness, an airy grace, in fact, combined with an absence of all mannerism, about the foliage, in these two designs, that is to be found in the works of no other artist. Very different, but equally good, are the designs to Bailey's "Summer's Night," and Alexander Smith's "Sea-shore Picture." This last is a room in itself; solemn, yet glowing with brilliancy, as befits the lively cadence of the poet's verse. Mr. Dodgson contributes some half dozen designs, all of which are very good, and two or three of which are really exquisite—for example, the Old House, the Evening Star, and the illustration to the Autumnal Sonnet. Mr. Godwin has several smartly-drawn eighteenth century costume groups, and Mr. Duncan some admirable sea pieces. The least satisfactory designs in the volume are Mr. T. Dalziel's murderous attempts on Tennyson's "May Queen." There are also several drawings by E. H. Corbould quite unworthy of his reputation. In conclusion, we may state generally that the engravers have accomplished their parts with very great ability, that the selections by Mr. Willmott are judiciously made, and that the book is altogether one entitling it to the highest place among the illustrated works of the season.

RHYMES AND ROUNDELS IN PRAISE OF A COUNTRY LIFE, is certain to be a popular volume for years to come. The subject would ensure this had the book no other attractions; but when we find that it positively sparkles with miniature pictures from the pencils of the most national of our artists, we may safely prophesy for it an extended popularity. The eye can range at leisure over wide-spreading landscapes and little rustic bits, then turn from these to picturesque country groups and charming rural scenes. Here are thick woods buried in gloomy shadow; here broad expanse of down, bathed, as it were, in rich sunlight:—

"Turfy mountains, where live nibbling sheep,
And flat meads, thatched with clover then to keep."

Now we come upon a bubbling brook; and now we almost catch the murmur of waves breaking on the solitary sea-shore; then we have pictures of cattle lowing in the meadows, hounds and huntsmen eager for the chase, and sportsmen roaming through the rough stubble. Of scenes of in-door country life there are several examples, but these are the least interesting in the volume. Mr. Absolon, somehow or other, thrusts such wooden heads on to the shoulders of his rustics, that one is only too happy to pass them by unnoticed. Were we to attempt to pick out the six or eight most successful designs in the volume, we should instance—first, Mr. Foster's marvellous illustration of Shelley's "Moonlight Night," a scene of inexpressible grandeur; then we should name the same artist's picture of "the sun uprising from ocean's billowy bed," certainly one of his finest works; next, his "Village Inn," a picture of a very different class, a sort of refined and elaborated Morland in fact,

but one that will command numerous admirers. Then, again, the winter scene, with sleep in the snow (page 147), is as true a bit of nature as the volume can boast of; and the same remark may be made of the moonlight picture on page 171, which is, to our thinking, exquisitely beautiful. Two of Mr. Duncan's landscapes deserve the highest praise: the one, a winter subject, on page 121, with a marvellous effect of distance most skillfully produced by the engraver; the other, a moonlight scene (page 155), where the engraver has evinced a similar talent in the production of that soft liquid-kind of effect which so admirably conveys the notion of the rising mist of evening.

The engravings, generally, are executed with considerable judgment, and the book is, on the whole, extremely well printed. The ornamental headings and initials are designed with much taste, and the binding of the volume is alike novel and elegant.

The next volume we have to speak of is THE BOOK OF JOB, with illustrations by John Gilbert. Now, Mr. Gilbert is not one of our greatest favourites. We look upon him as a sort of pictorial Alexandre Dumas, who takes undue advantage of the heaven-sent gift of facility. Mr. Gilbert draws too much and thinks too little. He is a great deal too clever, in fact. He can draw anything "somehow" at a moment's notice, and without a moment's reflection, sufficiently well to make it answer the moment's purpose. If John Gilbert, with his marvellous gift of the pencil, and the mind which he sometimes gives us a hint that he possesses, would rest on his ears a little; would give himself time to think first and draw afterwards, instead of reversing that natural order of things artistic, we are no cause to prevent his becoming at any rate a respectable approach to Raphael and to Hogarth. Rembrandt he could almost best in time. Nobody better understands the focussing of light than John Gilbert. Having found fault with Gilbert in the abstract, we have only to say that in his present illustrations to the "Book of Job" he has shown himself more like the Gilbert we believe he ought to be and might be, than in any work within the range of our previous knowledge. We will call attention to two drawings only, those on pages 27 and 41. The former is a study in the style of Rembrandt—the latter in that of Horace Vernet. In contemplating them, you feel John Gilbert to be not inferior to either—would he only betrust to himself and his high vocation.

The new edition of Pollok's COURSE OF TIME, is a goodly quarto, profusely illustrated, well printed, and elegantly bound. The principal drawings are by Mr. John Tenniel, than whom a more highly educated (we might almost say over-educated) Academical draughtsman does not exist in England. Mr. Tenniel, however, does not carry off all the artistic laurels growing from this publication. There is a drawing (page 19), illustrating a passage descriptive of condemned souls in the infernal regions, drawn by Mr. J. R. Clayton (an artist of whom we have previously spoken), which proves him to be an artist capable of great things. The female figure on the left-hand side of the picture is scarcely inferior, in its beautiful sadness, to Lignol's "Woman taken in Adultery." The Prison scene (page 179), a subject with a sort of Catermolean richness and crispness about it, but exhibiting that painstaking, severe-kind of drawing to which the great water-colour painter is a stranger, is another of Mr. Clayton's successful productions. The third, the Pharisee upon his knees, will be found a few pages further on. There are other drawings by him in the volume not so good. He shows a tendency towards pre-Raphaelite affectation; still he is evidently a man destined to produce something beyond mere commonplace compositions. Mr. Birket Foster contributes to this volume several of his tasteful woodland bits, the best of which is the scene, on the margin of a wood, which forms the heading to Book V. The mountain subject (page 289) is something totally different, yet equally deserving of admiration. The first illustration in the volume is a beautiful composition from his pencil, with this drawback, however, that it conveys the notion of having been copied from one of Martin's Biblical Pictures. A few pages further on, his scene of the "Crucifixion" forcibly reminds us of the well-known picture by Rembrandt. An artist of Mr. Foster's ability would be sure to select good models, still, we think, he would act wisely in avoiding that class of subjects which is likely to lead him into something akin to repetitions of well-known works by other artists.

Mr. Birket Foster illustrates GRAHAME'S SABBATH single-handed, and a good idea of the versatility of his genius may be formed from an inspection of the thirty pictures that decorate the pages of this charming book. Our space will not permit us to refer to more than some half-dozen of the more remarkable ones. What an air of calmness pervades the beautiful rural scene with which the poem opens; how natural and how graceful is the foliage; how delicate the shades of the distance and the tints of the clouds; how brilliant the sunlight in which the whole landscape is enveloped! Woodland scenes are those which this artist excels in, and the one on page 15 is as true to nature as a photograph is; the same may be said of the little vignette of the robin on page 33. The composition on page 45, "Sabbath Evening in Scotland," and the "Shepherd's Shield," a few pages further on, have all the elements of elaborate pictures; but no design pleases us better than that of the shepherd listening to the lark in early spring—conception, effect, and touch, are alike admirable. The illustrations to the "Biblical Pictures" do not satisfy us—the landscapes look like compositions; when Mr. Foster is on foreign ground, his right hand seems to forget its cunning.

THE LORD OF THE ISLES, illustrated by Foster and Gilbert, is hardly so good as the previous volumes of Scott's poems. One cannot complain, however, of a lack of illustrations, all more or less clever. There is a vigour and a smartness about Mr. Gilbert's designs, that render him a good exponent of Scott's picturesque verse; he has not, however, laid himself out for any very ambitious efforts, but has mostly contented himself with producing a number of clever sketchy drawings. Mr. Foster's productions, of course, evince a far more careful style of treatment, and all that elaboration of effect which he is accustomed to bestow on his most simple designs.

THE REV. JAMES ANDERSON'S LADIES OF THE REFORMATION, is a volume that old Luther would have left off a game of bowls to look at. It is as handsome as an old missal—when such things were worth a few hundred acres of land a piece. Of the literary merits of the book we need not speak. It is merely the completion of a deservedly popular series of biographical studies, and is a most gratifying indication of a return to that glorious old Teutonic principle of woman worship, which Charles Kingsley and other sensible people are desirous of reviving—a principle which neither Celt nor Tartar ever would or will understand—and the recognition of which is the most triumphant, as it is the most graceful, assertion of the superiority of the German races. A volume containing the lives of twenty-five good women, lucidly and conscientiously written, by a man who combines in his personality the three claims to respect of the priest, the gentleman, and the scholar, cannot fail to be interesting. The book is profusely illustrated by Godwin, Thomas, and other artists. Mr. Thomas's illustrations are decidedly the best, which is as much as to say, that they are admirable in a very high degree—Mr. Godwin's being far above mediocrity. There are also some excellent ornamental headings by Mr. Noel Humphreys—and some gems of landscape and architecture, from the pencil of a retiring genius whom the world will one day insist upon dragging from the semi-obscurity in which he attempts to conceal himself—Mr. H. G. Hine. The vignettes by this gentleman, in the present work, might be claimed by Samuel Prout or Clarkson Stanfield.

It would be rather late in the day to criticise the THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER, Coleridge's world-renowned poem. Messrs. Sampson Low and Co., have recently issued a new edition of that glorious nightmare, illustrated by Welhert, Duncan, and Birket Foster. It always pains us to have to allude to Mr. Welhert. We cannot say that we generally like his drawings—on wood or paper. To us they appear ugly and colourless. And yet, while contemplating them, we are bound to admit, that we are in the presence of a man with brains. In the design of the dead men on the deck of the ship (page 39), he has only just missed producing a really grand group. There is something clever, too, about the figures of Death and the Woman on page 23. In the draped skeleton particularly there is an unmistakeable touch of originality.

You feel that the artist has understood Coleridge thoroughly, but that his powers of expression are not equal to the subject.

Mr. Birket Foster contributes a few designs, but they are more or less conventionalities. Any shortcomings on the part of the other artists, however, are more than redeemed by some marvellous sea-pieces by Edward Duncan—a man of unquestionable and original genius. His drawing of our old acquaintance, the

“—painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.”

(that is to say, of the unfortunate vessel that appeared so) is positively ghastly in its truthfulness; and really adds fresh horror to the poem. If Mr. Duncan will take our advice, he will enlarge this sketch, and make a picture of it for one of the next year's exhibitions. There is also a drawing, by the same artist, of the strange ship that

“—drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the sun.”

—a masterpiece in itself, but vastly inferior to the beamed ship. The scene among the ice makes a charming picture, and the design of the ship lazily sailing on through the blazing sunshine is certainly a very admirable one.

VOICES FROM THE GREENWOOD, adapted from the Original (whatsoever that may be), by Lady Wallace, is a pretty-looking book, and seems well written. It is, at all events, capably illustrated, though the artist's name is withheld. There is one picture—a shadowy, snowy figure, evidently representing King Winter, amusing himself with a frozen shank in his lap—worthy of Grandville, Gustave Doré, or George Cruikshank. We regret we have not had time to read this book through. It consists of a series of tales supposed to be narrated by different plants, and is apparently of German origin. If the writing is equal in merit to the illustrations (which, from the specimens we have studied, we see no reason to doubt), “Voices from the Greenwood” is a book well worth reading. It is worth purchasing, at all events, if only for the sake of the one drawing we have alluded to.

Nobody at all acquainted with Mr. Noel Humphreys's marvellous achievements in the way of ornamental design, will be surprised to find that he knows all about shells and sea-weeds—just as he has shown himself master of every detail connected with moth and butterfly economy. OCEAN GARDENS; or, “The History of a Marine Aquarium,” gives you the idea that Mr. Humphreys must have been on familiar terms with a lady named Undine, and that he has heaps of acquaintances among the denizens of the salt seas—those remarkably scaly yelped nomen. Pleasantly apart, “Ocean Gardens” is an indispensable book to all aquarium fanciers. Mr. Humphreys has evidently accomplished a labour of love. The volume is illustrated with numerous coloured engravings from the author's drawings, better coloured, by the way, than we ever remember to have seen drawings in a printed book—a very certain indication that the work has been planned and superintended by a real artist.

We have not space to speak of Mr. Austin's two elegant and learned volumes, “Sakontala” and “Roman Anthology,” as we would wish. We must reserve them over till our next number, when we will treat of them at that length which such remarkable and such carefully-prepared books deserve to have assigned to them.

GIFT BOOKS FOR CHILDREN.

THE publishers have been good enough, out of affection to the little boys and girls, who are at home for their Christmas holidays, and will expect presents to be made to them, to bring out a number of tempting-looking little volumes, all vying with each other for uprightness of subject and morality of treatment. When the little boys and girls are taken by their fond parents to the bookseller's shop to choose a book for their Christmas gift, they will find the volumes, all bound up in their grand bright red, blue, and green covers, and stamped all over with gold, like a drawing-room paper, each one looking so beautiful that whole shelves will have to be taken down before the selection can be made. The dear children will have to open them, and tear apart the gilt edges so as to look at all the engravings—before they can come to any decision as to which book is likely to prove the most interesting. The young gentleman will be smitten with such drawings as “the man surrounded by dogs,” or “Frank and the lion.” His quick brain will conclude, that, in both instances, the hero is eaten alive bit by bit, or torn to pieces, and then left to die; and with his imagination at full play, he will consider that three shillings and sixpence is not too large a price for being put in full possession of the facts of this dreadful case of suffering. The young lady, being of a more delicate and amiable disposition, will feel her curiosity aroused by such gentle illustrations as that of “the doll's house on fire,” or “the death of the pet canary.”

Every educational subject, from the history of India to the history of sugar—every moral treatise, from the fall of pride to the reward of modesty—has its royal sixteenmo or small quarto edition. If one half of the excellent maxims contained in these grandly-bound works leave any impressions of virtue upon the minds of the youthful readers, we may expect that, in ten years' time, the world will have considerably improved in integrity and excellence. The school-boy, who reads of the bitter agony with which young Thomas was visited for telling his dear, widowed mother Wellingtons by treading the paths of truth and honest dealing. Fraudulent bankruptcies will cease—secretaries to public companies will no longer keep country villas and town mansions out of pilferings from their trusts—and forgeries and accommodation bills will be as seldom heard of as dodos, sea serpents, or bearded ladies. The little girls, shocked by the rude manner in which Julia spoke to the blind beggar-man, will bloom into womanhood with hearts as easily moved by affliction as a handbox by a luggage porter. Warned by the punishment that followed Matilda's love of fine clothing, and how, with tears and humiliation, she had, after all, to confess that it was not the parrot that stole the missing lace collar, the little readers, in frocks and trousers, will, by the time they attain the proper age for assuming the kid boot and the putting crinoline, have learned the wholesome fact, that the two shillings and sixpenny Dunstable is better than the black velvet and feathers, if the heart is joyful and the conscience at peace.

The Young Yagers. By Captain Mayne Reid.

Many are the boys who, while we write, are receiving at the hands of the schoolmaster's wife the last touch of pomatum before they are sent on their glad way home—who will be authorities on sporting life in South Africa, long before their eyes brighten over the Christmas pudding; for their old friend, Captain Mayne Reid, who introduced them some time since to the “Bush Boys,” has now new companions for them in the “Young Yagers.” It is hardly needful to introduce the Captain to that public with whom he is already on such familiar terms, viz., the boys of England. No doubt they have their thousand nicknames for him, and his adventurous heroes. They are familiar with all the scrapes and dangers through which he has put his characters; and a mere glance at the frontispiece of the “Young Yagers,” where Mr. Harvey has pictorially described Hendrik's escape from the blue buck, will send them eagerly to the new adventures. We can promise them, once more, all the pleasure they have already enjoyed in the “Bush Boys.” Many a rogue who will sit down to his Christmas dinner, with the “Young Yagers” slyly hidden under him, that he may resume his study of it the instant his share of the dessert has been apportioned to him, will lament the comfortable dining-room in which hard fate has planted him; and mutely quarrel with destiny that she did not cast his lot between the Yellow and Orange rivers; and did not set him down to feast in a camp, in a grove of Babylonian willows. His sisters will listen to his account of the blue buck and the angry lions, possibly holding tightly between their little fingers a volume as gay in its scarlet and gold, as Captain Mayne Reid's story.

Lilian's Golden Hours. By Eliza Meteyard.

The young ladies, we mean those little ones who are not yet promoted to the honours of crinoline, would hardly find much to admire in the exciting narratives of Captain Mayne Reid. Just as they prefer dolls to

tops, and skipping-ropes to cricket-bats, will they prefer the graceful and tender lessons Miss Meteyard has prepared for them this Christmas, under the title of “Lilian's Golden Hours.” While the boys are carried off to South Africa, to their great delight—for boys have a passion for motion—the girls are left in England. The scene is a romantic one, however. The famous Rounton Rocks in Derbyshire, and the ruined house of Eyre at their base, “make up the scene which Miss Meteyard has undertaken to people for the amusement and instruction of her readers. Nor is the instruction forced upon the children. In point of fact, they decline to have it forced upon them; they have enough of this at school. If a writer pretends to amuse them, and writes to instruct, or rather to cultivate their emotions (which we take to be the most important part of education in children), he must very dexterously hide the powder in jelly. “Lilian's Golden Hours” may be fairly said to have their full share of romance. The adventures, the accidents of life, should be used to hint their own morals. Children are quite shrewd enough to pick the little lessons out for themselves. The “tone” of “Lilian's Golden Hours” to use a cant word, is excellent, the spirit throughout womanly, and we cordially recommend mothers to let their daughters become familiar with the pictures of the Derbyshire rocks, and the moorlands of Yorkshire. The love for animals, on which Miss Meteyard dwells with real emotion, is a sentiment that may be made a strong agent for good in children. Absolon has illustrated scenes from the “Golden Hours” with a graceful pencil. His figures want individuality, perhaps; still, if the features of his matrons be uniformly regular, they have, at all events, the equally general effect of pleasing.

Light from the East. Tales Compiled by George Meason.

We have touched upon adventures in the wilds of Africa—our eyes have swept over the moorlands of Yorkshire—in endeavours to lead holiday children to enjoy pleasant idle hours with their gift books; and now the East unfolds its stories before us within the bright covers (still red and gold) of a compilation by George Meason. We have here selections of eastern stories from Addison, Warton, Magin, and others—stories that cannot fail to move children, for all that is bright and gorgeous—all that has an affinity to the fancies and the glee—all the sunshine that lights the minds of our children—comes from the “Arabian Nights.” Then, Kenny Meadows—always suggestive—with a thought ever at the point of his pencil, has furnished drawings to this gift from the East. We have but one error to correct: it is the compiler's preface assertion that “the ‘Hambler,’ ‘Idler,’ ‘Spectator,’ ‘Bee,’ &c., are seldom to be met with on the shelves of modern collectors of books,” and that “the names of Addison, Hawke, Steele, and others of our essayists, are now rarely mentioned.”

Salt Water; or the Sea-Life and Adventures of Neil D'Arcy, the Midshipman. By W. H. G. Kingston.

Many a boy who will enter a bookseller's shop this Christmas to choose the customary gift-book, will snatch up a thick, blue covered volume with golden birds and dolphins upon its back, and will be more attracted by its title than by the “Light from the East,” or even by Captain Mayne Reid's bold adventures, for English boys have a passion for the sea. The story of Nelson is familiar to them all. Not a shipwreck passes away from the public mind without having provoked from their scientific lips very knowing criticisms on the behaviour of the crew. And now, hundreds of them will discuss the adventures of Neil D'Arcy, the midshipman, as described by Mr. W. Kingston, the author of “Peter the Whaler,” and illustrated by H. Anelay.

Early Down, or Stories to Think About. By a Country Clergyman.

In this excellent little book, a very clever papa is supposed to be speaking. He seems to be acquainted with the use and origin of almost every thing on earth. When little Willy asks for another cup of coffee, he gets it accompanied by a full description of where coffee comes from. This papa is also a strong advocate for economy; and, on one occasion, when Willy asked to have more sugar in his tea, offered him, if he would go without it, the sum of one shilling a year. We consider this offer mean, and Willy did right to refuse it. This is done in a chapter on the great good or evil which may spring out of little things. Papa demonstrates that by Willy's taking a shilling a year, it would be a saving to the parental pocket of 16s. 6d.; for, reckoning the amount of sugar consumed at three lumps for breakfast and three lumps for tea, the yearly total would amount to 2,190 lumps, or thirty pounds, which, at sevenpence per pound, costs 17s. 6d. This system of domestic economy is based on the same principle as that pursued by the Scotch gentleman who gave his little boy a penny whenever he went to bed without supper, and in the morning made the lad buy with it a roll for his breakfast. Further, to impress upon Willy's mind the great necessity of attending to little things, an anecdote is given of Herr Habber, a merchant of Hamburg, who always dressed shabbily when at business, and tore off, and carefully put away, the backs of letters which were not written upon. He once severely scolded his clerk for wasting a bit of string. This rigid business-economy enabled him to live like a prince in his own house, and keep open table for all his friends, and have the finest service of gold plate in the city. No doubt little Willy thought as we do, that it is as silly to waste by extravagance in a private residence, as it is to be meanly careful in a business office.

But this little book is nevertheless a very interesting and excellent companion. It contains so much curious information, and it is written in so chatty and pleasant a style, that we cannot help feeling the greatest respect for the clever papa who is supposed to be lecturing Master Willy.

Young gentlemen who are fond of reading about natural curiosities, and parents who wish their children to benefit from the sound judgment and excellent philosophy of a careful author, will be sure to approve of the volume. The chapter entitled, “It's all in the Dark,” is especially deserving of praise, for exposing, in a manner so lucid that even Master Willy must have understood it, the folly of being afraid to go to bed in the dark.

Our Eastern Empire, or Stories from the History of British India.

This would be a very delightful book if there was more about British India, and less about Mrs. Leslie and her family. It has been written in the conversational style; and to make the dialogue appear more natural, Masters Edward and Harry, and Miss Edith are continually interrupting their mamma in the midst of her story by remarks either expressive of wonder, inquiry, or approbation. After a time this becomes excessively tiring and impertinent, and makes the reader feel inclined to order the children to be sent to bed superfluous. It has the effect of destroying the thread of the story. You wish to learn all you can about the history of Clive's life, but it is broken into at every fourth line by the remarks of the young people who are listening to it. A battle has to wait, and the English army cannot obtain their victory, until a discussion on the morality of the quarrels of nations has been ended. Then again the attention of the young reader is broken into at the end of every chapter by some domestic narrative about the proceedings of the youthful branches of the Leslie family, so that Clive's adventures get somehow mixed up with a game at billiards, and the successes of Hastings become mingled with pony riding and a lost watch, until you scarcely know whether the scene is laid in British India or Great Britain. If it were not for these incongruities, the little book would be excessively interesting and more pleasantly instructive.

Julia Matland, or Pride goes before a Fall.

Julia Matland is, judging from one of Mr. Absolon's illustrations, a very pretty young lady of about seventeen; but the story tells us that she was a giddy, proud girl. She insults Mr. Grey, her aunt's future husband, in the rudest and most heartless manner, calling him “a common-looking man” and “an obscure individual.” How much more is her cousin, Matilda, to be admired, who makes her mother's home a perfect paradise, and renders needy Mrs. Howard the happiest of parents! Julia's pride has a severe fall, and by the time it gets up again she has become an altered girl. This book has been written for the improvement of young ladies; and no doubt the heart-rending sufferings of the heroine—her being forced to go out as a governess, and her riding about all day long in a hackney-coach without money to pay the fare—will prove a strong moral lesson to those little misses who are inclined to be proud and insulting.

Pictures from the Pyrenees, or Agnes and Kate's Travels.

Is a very well-written book, giving a very entertaining account of the trip of Mr. Talbot and family to the South of France. Mrs. Talbot has not been very well of late, and the doctor has evidently said, “Talbot, your wife wants change of air and scene; she must breathe a warm climate. Go to the Pyrenees, Talbot.” The remarks made by Agnes and Kate, whenever they see anything new or curious, are childlike and original in their simplicity and truthfulness. A very good description is given of the baths of Balthère. Miss Agnes, who is the first to catch sight of one of the bathers hurrying to the *châleuseau*, exclaims, “Look! a lady is being carried in that chair, dressed only in her night clothes! Truly enough they beheld a figure in a night cap and flannel gown borne quickly along by porters towards the bath-house.”

Many interesting anecdotes are told of Henry of Navarre and the Princess Catherine, his sister, as well as of Marguerite de Valois, the sister of Francis I. You move about with this pleasant family all through their travels, and enjoy the high spirits of the little girls almost as much as if you formed one of the party. You are also enchanted with Mr. Talbot's excessive care of his aging wife, and almost suspect that the lady must have an annuity, or some such cause, for the husband's affectionate attentions. The etchings which illustrate the book are, we should say, from the nervousness of the touch, the productions of a lady artist. They are carefully drawn, and convey a good idea of the costume of the country. It would appear by one of them that the haymakers in the *vallee d'Ossu* are principally women, and that when they go to work, they tuck up their petticoats higher than a Scotchman's kilt.

Granny's Wonderful Chair and its Tales of Fairy Tales.

Miss Frances Brown is a very clever lady and a most graceful authoress. Out of love for the little children whom she meets every poor soul—for she is kind—she has written one of the prettiest story books we have read for a long time, and one whose pages will be turned over by the chubby fingers of its little readers until they are half worn-out by constant perusal. There are eight stories, and it is difficult to say which is the most interesting of them. Granny's wonderful chair is itself a most curious piece of fairy upholstery. Whenever little Snowflower feels lonely, she has only to lay her head gently down on the cushion, and say, “Chair of my Grandmother, tell me a story,” and then a clear voice under the velvet covering begins to relate a new and wonderful tale. If little Snowflower wants to travel and see the world, she addresses the chair in these words, “Chair of my Grandmother, take me such a way,” and off it rattles at the rate of a cack and six; and, according to Mr. Meadows's illustration, nymphs with plant backs and round graceful arms, and fairies with peacock's feathers falling like a court-train from their shoulders, accompany Miss Snowflower on her journey. One of the stories is about the Christmas Cuckoo, who brings the poor cobblers, Scrub and Spare, every year two leaves from the other side of the world, one plucked from the golden tree and the other from merry tree. You may be sure that the cobbler who chooses the leaf from the merry tree is the more fortunate of the two. This is perhaps the least imaginative, although the most pointed, of the stories. The adventures of Prince Fairyfoot, the son of the King of Stumpingham, who is discarded by his parents on account of the smallness of his feet, are very playfully and charmingly related.

The eight fairy tales in the volume are as different in imaginative treatment as if they had been written by eight different authors. It is true you grow tired with reading about so many wonderful things, and are apt to think that the fatigue is owing to a sameness in a writer's style and thought; but it is the very sweetness of the composition which cloy the appetite, for if read at intervals, each new story seems better than the last, although at the time it was read the last one appeared the perfection of fancy and literary power.

Mr. Kenny Meadows has graced the book with several illustrations, which are as fairy-like as the text they accompany. We would especially draw attention to the engraving of the “Fading of Prince Wisewit.” The figure of his Royal Highness has a supernatural elegance about it, and is clothed in garments of such mystic material, that they seem to be composed of moonbeams and the web of the garden spider, such as is seen of a morning stretched across the branches, with the dew clinging to the threads. The fantastic head and tail-pieces which adorn each chapter are wonderful for their grace and originality. There are two little cupids' heads kissing through a ring—little incarnations of love, for the faces are supported on butterfly's wings. Nothing can be more fantastic than the little elves with their dragonfly wings, shouting into ear, and intended to illustrate the fairy words coming from the velvet cushion, “Listen to the story of Merrywind.” The little cupid resting on an ostrich's plume seems to float on the paper, so light and feathery has the artist made his drawing. It is rather unfair that many of Mr. Meadows' cuts should be the same blocks that have already appeared in the “Art Union,” as illustrations to a story by Mrs. S. C. Hall. Those who do not understand the mysteries of publishing and the cleverness of making the same wood-cut do duty in three or four different works, would feel inclined to complain that Mr. Meadows should repeat himself so often. The truth is, that it is the publisher, and not the artist, who is guilty of the repetition.

Gruffel Swilteindrenken, or the Reproof of the Brutes.

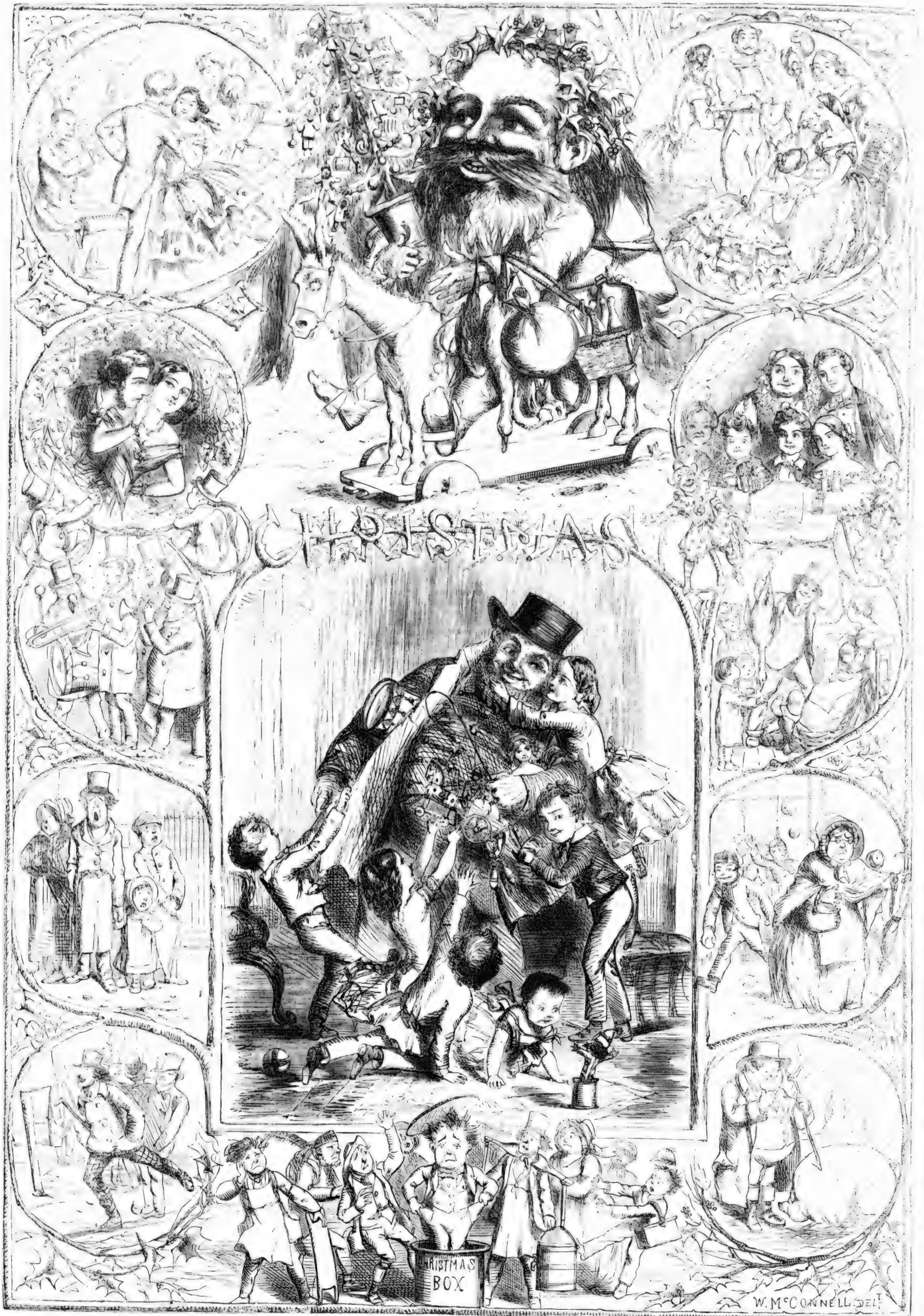
Is an elaborate and highly-coloured stupidity, by Mr. Alfred Croquill, founded upon the same kind of notion as Mr. George Cruikshank's “Bottle,” showing the distresses brought upon a family by the male parent's love of drink. He knocks his wife down and neglects his children; at last he is suddenly converted to sobriety through the agency of a gnome, who threatens to change him into the form of an animal, and for that purpose introduces him to a meeting of brutes. The objections of the brutes of the forests to receive the brute of the city among them, form the satirical portion of the work. In the first place, Mr. Croquill cannot sketch animals, which may account for his drawing a hog with the same proportions as an elephant. In the next place, his conception of a gnome seems to be a dwarf, with a pantomime mask and straight lines eyed about his opaque body to convey luminousness. The letterpress is not worth noticing, for the illustrations form the main feature of the work.

Lough and Grom Wise.

Is a child's book in the German school. The rhyming is tame and almost silly done, but the notions are funny, and we should say would be amusing to children. “Cruel Jack” pulls a cat's tail, and subjects him to a shower-bath under a watering-pot. The cat suddenly begins to grow, and becomes bigger and bigger, until he is sufficiently large to pick up the little tyrant like a rat, and carry him off to eat him in a quiet corner. “Master Fred” is afraid of being left alone in the dark, and insists upon having a light in his bed-room. He sees his shadow cast by the candle on the wall, and in his alarm, takes it for a black man, and, rushing out of the room, he falls down stairs and lies senseless on the mat at the bottom of them, where Betty finds him in the morning when she is sweeping the hall, and brushes him into her pan with the other rubbish, and throws him away. There are other stories, of the little boy and girl who would not mind the bull, and were tossed up into the moon; and of Master Wilful Tommy, who insisted on going out into the wet, and dissolved in the shower like salt. These stories are intended to frighten young tire-somes into good behaviour, rather than to instruct them to do better. But even if the little readers cannot obey one half of the title, and grow wise, they are sure to attend to the other portion of it, and laugh.

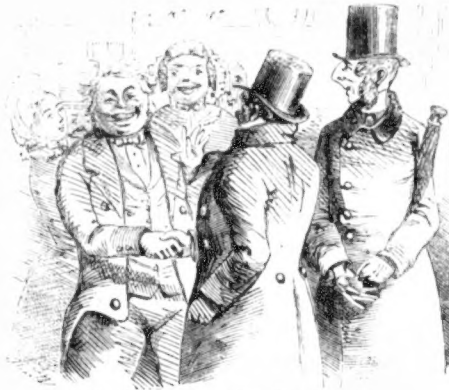
ARRIVAL OF DR. LIVINGSTONE.

DR. LIVINGSTONE arrived in London, from Southampton, on Saturday, to find himself as famous as any traveller since Bruce. For seventeen years he has been absent from England; he has scarcely spoken his own language for sixteen years—so long (and so little) that now he hesitates, speaks with a peculiar accent, is sometimes at a loss for words, and his sentences are occasionally inverted. He lived with a tribe of Bechuanas for eight years, preaching the Christian faith. In conjunction with Mr. Oswald, he discovered the magnificent Lake Ngami, in the interior of Africa. He traced by himself the course of the river Zambesi in Eastern Africa, and explored one of the vast deserts of the continent, and the country of the true Negro race. Of Dr. Livingstone's life and travels we shall speak more at length in our next number, when we hope to present his portrait to our readers.



CHRISTMAS PLEASURES AND ANNOYANCES.—(DRAWN BY M'CONNELL.)

RETURNING HOME FROM A CHRISTMAS PARTY HOW HOB AND NOBB WERE GAROTTED



THE CHRISTMAS PARTY BEING OVER,



HOB AND NOBB, BEFORE THEY SEPARATE, REVEAL TO EACH OTHER THEIR MEANS OF DEFENCE AGAINST GAROTTERS



BUT HOB HAD PREVIOUSLY REVEALED TO HIMSELF ANOTHER SAFEGUARD,



WHICH NOBB NOT POSSESSING HE IS FORSAKEN BY HIS USUAL COURAGE—



HE IS PURSUED BY HORRID FEARS OF A TICKET-OF-LEAVE MAN.



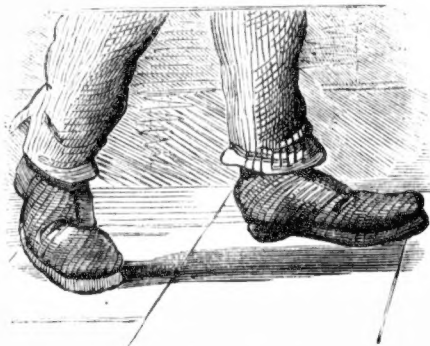
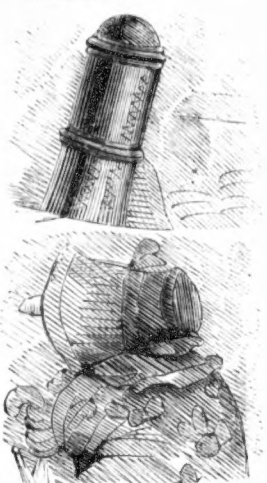
AND VISIONS OF STRANGULATION.



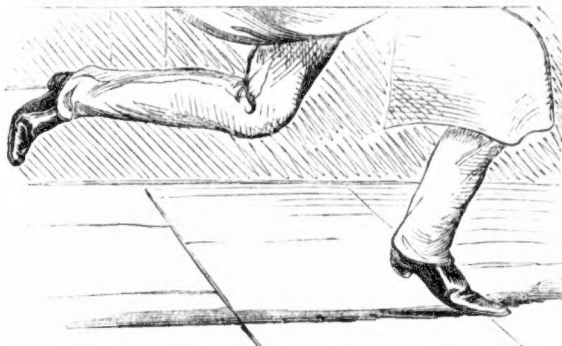
HOB, WHO PERCEIVES THAT THE POLICE HAVE BEEN DOUBLED



IS NOT ALARMED AT THE VARIOUS SUSPICIOUS CHARACTERS WHOM HE MEETS—AND QUIETLY LOSES HIS WAY.



NECESSITY, IN THE GUISE OF LACE-UP BOOTS AND CORDUROYS,



BECOMES TO NOBB THE MOTHER OF ANOTHER ANTI-GAROTTE INVENTION.



HOB'S COURAGE RAPIDLY EVAPORATES AT THE SIGHT OF A MYSTERIOUS PEDESTRIAN—



NOBB'S FEARS ARE REDOUBLED AT A SIMILAR APPEARANCE—



UNTIL HE RECOGNISES THE SUPPOSED RUFFIAN—



WHOM HE EMBRACES



TO THE BEST OF HIS POWER!



ATTEMPTED ESCAPE AND TABLEAU



MUTUAL RECOGNITION!

LAW AND CRIME.

THE arguments of Fielding and Dickens in preference of private to public executions might receive strong confirmation from the execution of Joseph Marley on Monday morning last, and that, too, in a manner which has not been anticipated by either of those authors. While Dickens draws his deductions chiefly from the character of the mob which a public strangulation collects, Fielding could certainly not have foreseen the way in which the most fearful punishment would long after his day be reduced to a mere authorised transaction. Doctor Johnson, upon the projected abolition of the Tithing processions, lamented that the age was running mad after innovation. "The old method," said he, "was most satisfactory to all parties. The public was gratified by a procession; the criminal was supported by it. Why is all this to be swept away?" At least we know that in the days of Fielding and Johnson, a public execution was a tragic sight. If it occasionally commanded pity for the sufferer, it always awakened feelings of awe and horror in the spectators. The execution of Joseph Marley produced none of these effects. The ragged shuffling ruffianism which poured in from the dens of London, in the early gray of last Monday morning, was, to start with, not a very practicable material for the evolution of any emotion beyond that of mere transient and barbarous excitement. When the assembled mob was tolerably packed, and the bell of Saint Sepulchre's tolled seven, the human weariness of the gazers sought for amusement in the dreary interval. The coster-mongers lit their pipes, the thieves collected in knots for a purpose afterwards apparent, and shrewd labourers argued as to the propriety of capital punishment and the possible identity of the crime of the hangman with that of the victim, who had been slain for profit and without personal malice. At a public-house opposite the scaffold a crowd of reeking blackguards, remarkable for a universality of broken noses, the result of pugilistic frays, smoked and drank rum before the tap, while the rooms, and even the tiles overlooking the machinery of death, were crowded with mirthful occupants. At the very apex of the sloping roof a woman sat in drunken ecstasy, flourishing a gin bottle and saluting the shouting mob, looking, as she did so, like the very incarnation of vice, the presiding genius of that bad scene, wielding the sceptre of demoralization. To say that the ragamuffins below scarcely uttered three words without an oath, would be only to describe their ordinary conversation. They would have done as much, trafficking for fish, or describing a favourite actor, and therefore this proved nothing beyond the non-impressiveness of the spectacle. At length, eight o'clock struck, and at the instant arose cries of "Hats off!" and "There's Marley!"

A more unconventional or undramatic criminal, or, in short, a more thoroughly uninteresting man, could scarcely have been imagined. A fellow can hardly be expected to appear a hero under the Old Bailey beam, but the impression excited by this wretched object was that of one who has committed an act of utter stupidity and is aware that the public surrounds him and is acquainted with the fact. He looked ashamed and vexed, but by no means frightened. He had evidently seen an execution before. He carefully abstained from looking at the crowd as though he feared that the sight might unnerve him. The chaplain—perhaps not a pleasant-looking man, but an angel could scarcely have seemed adorable under such circumstances—read a few lines while the hangman made his arrangements, and, when the murderer suddenly collapsed into a half-length figure, the clerical gentleman walked away. It seemed really as though the worthy ordinary had entrapped the fellow into a pitfall, and then deserted him. That instant the condemned, to all appearance, died. It was a triumph of mechanical artifice as applied to retribution—a curious and rapidly-working contrivance of a rope and a chain, a hinge and a bolt; but for moral effect there was none, except as an exemplification of the rapidity to which modern appliances have attained in respect to the extinction of life. The brief shudder of departing animation ceased, and the body swung slowly half round, exposing the hands, still of the ruddy hue of life. As these turned gradually blue in the shadows of the fingers, the thieves collected themselves, according to the tactics taught them by the police, into charges or rushes, inclosing every spectator of decent appearance, over whose entire front a dozen hands at once spread themselves rapaciously. The hangman had exemplified the moral lesson of his craft, and its results were those of the famous sermon against usury, described by Le Sage as having been preached before the money-lender and his client. "Il a fait très bien son métier, allons maintenant faire le notre."—"He has done his business well, let us then get about ours." Marley, too, had preached his text. It ran thus:—"It is a silly thing to render yourself liable to be hanged, but when you have done so, bear with the penalty as best you may." Superadded to these was the experience that, after all, hanging was an easier death than any to be occasioned by old age, disease, or accident. This is all that was to be learned from the execution of Joseph Marley, unless we may except the inevitable impression produced upon every educated witness, that this kind of thing must inevitably perish, or be made terrible, in our own day. It cannot be continued after its present fashion. It must be endowed with something of an awful character, either according to Fielding's idea, by shrouding its details in mystery, or by the accompaniment of a dismal public ceremony equivalent to that of which Johnson regretted the abolition. We are told that within the jail the preparations are solemn enough; but then the minds of the sheriffs and their friends are not those sought to be acted upon. Men outside, who would have shuddered at the death of a dog, looked on almost with indifference at a mere utilitarian method of getting rid of a common enemy with the slightest possible discomfort to himself.

Mr. Baron Alderson, in a recent charge to a grand jury, expressed a strong opinion against the ticket-of-leave system. Hereupon Mr. Baron Bramwell, in another charge to another grand jury, speaks out too, but expresses no particular opinion at all, a fact which he himself is most careful to inculcate, after having indulged in one or two of the feeblest sophisms lately promulgated. It appeared to him that the granting of tickets-of-leave had very little to do with the commission of crime by the persons who received them. We would respectfully ask, whether those who have been robbed by scoundrels whose term of transportation has not expired, but who are nevertheless at large, would not consider the ticket as having something to do with the commission of crime? Mr. Baron Bramwell says the same result would have occurred if the prisoner had been sentenced to a shorter period, or received a pardon. We answer, of course it might, as it also might have escaped from jail, or been acquitted for defect of evidence, or, in fact, had he not been taken at all. But as none of these things happened, and as it is perfectly clear that a fellow cannot be working at the hulks and half-murdering peaceable pedestrians in the streets at the same time, we must consider, even adversely to so eminent a judicial authority, that the ticket-of-leave has a great deal to do with all crimes committed in the meantime by a convict liberated before the expiration of his sentence. But why do learned Barons make grand juries the dummy media of expressions of opinion on subjects with which grand juries have no more to do than with astronomy? Former convictions are not allowed to be alleged against prisoners till after verdict by the petty jury, and the grand jury has only to decide as to whether an indictment presents a fair *prima facie* case. The object of the Barons is, of course, to have these opinions published in the papers; and it would be much more straightforward, and not less dignified, to send them direct to the papers, and not to smuggle them, after this irrelevant fashion, through judicial speeches.

A sad blunder has been committed with respect to a discovery which might have brought to light the murderer of Mr. Little. A canvas bag, so wet as to show that it had been taken out of water only immediately before, was found in a hamper in a store connected with the railway. This bag was one of those used by the murdered man, and the money was believed to have formed part of the sum which was stolen. The bag was at once taken and given up to the police, and the facts announced in the papers. Now, had this bag only been allowed to remain, and a concealed watch set upon the spot, the murderer might probably have been arrested in a few minutes afterwards.

Mr. Prendergast, in passing sentence of fifteen years' transportation upon garrotte robber, remarked that all offences of this kind would be punished with the utmost severity. But as Mr. Baron Waton has previously sentenced a similar offender to transportation for life, the utmost severity must mean something more than a sentence of 15 years, and one of the two men must have received much more or much less than a just punishment.

THE MURDER AT LEEDS.

JOHN HANNAH, aged 22, was indicted for the wilful murder of Jane Banham, at Armsley, near Leeds, on the 11th of September last. Mr. Maple stated the case to the jury. The prisoner was a tailor, aged twenty-two. The woman with whose murder he was charged, was the daughter of John Hope, who was connected with a dramatic company. She had been married to William Banham, an equestrian in an itinerant circus, who had left her, and was now in Australia. For some time previous to December, 1855, she lived with the prisoner as his wife, and she had two children by him. In that month she left him, and endeavoured to persuade her to live with him again. He had an interview with her on this subject at the Malt Mill Inn, Armsley. He had previously taken his own child, three years of age, into the parlour, and began to fondle it. (On the mention of his child, the prisoner seemed very greatly distressed. He pressed his head between his hands, and cried bitterly.) The prisoner appealed to Mr. Hope on the subject. Hope said they must settle their affairs between them, and left the room. As he did so his daughter appeared at the front door, as if to leave the house, observing, "I don't want to have anything more to do with you, and I will not." The prisoner took her again into the parlour, and the door was sharply closed. A scuffle was then heard, and some persons who were at the bar went in, and found Jane Banham on the floor, and the prisoner in the act of cutting her throat with a razor. The prisoner was dragged away, but so horrified were the people present that he was allowed to leave the room. He was locked out of the house, and his hands and shirt were dabbled in blood. The deceased was at first placed in the air on a chair, but was afterwards taken into the house. A surgeon was sent for, when the centre of her throat was found gashed from ear to ear. This was shortly after twelve o'clock. She never spoke, and expired at two o'clock.

Evidence of these facts having been given by the same witnesses who were examined at the inquest, the jury retired to consider their verdict, and, after an absence of a quarter of an hour, returned with a verdict of Guilty. Mr. Justice Erle then passed sentence of death on the prisoner, observing that he had been convicted on evidence which was equally satisfactory to the jury and to his Lordship's own mind.

The prisoner, on hearing his doom, fell back into the arms of the jailer and fainted. He shortly recovered, and was then removed to the condemned cell.

CHARGE OF MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS.

CAPTAIN JAMES BURN, of the brig Mars, has been arrested on a charge of murdering a boy named Robert Beecroft. The mate thus described the boy:—"We put into Lowestoft on the 3rd of June. There we shipped a cabin boy named Robert Beecroft, from fourteen to fifteen years of age, not a very strong, but a healthy boy, and he continued so on our outward voyage to Cuba. He was at times a little backward with his work, but I considered him of good character altogether, and I had no complaint to make of him. He was not ill-used on the passage out by any one. He complained of sickness in the West Indies, but took some medicine some seven or eight days before we left, and appeared to recover perfectly. Four or five days after we sailed he complained of a headache. We were then in a hot climate. He became not very apt at his work, and sometimes had to be helped a little, but did his work as best he could. If he did not get on he used to get a 'wollopping.' I have seen the master beat him more than once, and after he became ill. I cannot say the day the first beating occurred, but he was beaten the day before he died."

Evidence was given by several witnesses as to the repeated and cruel beatings by the captain. One witness then deposed as to the last beating. "I saw the master, through the skylight, again beating him. The boy lay on the cabin floor, and the blows were given on his body very severely. The captain said with an oath, 'I'll kill you.' I did not hear this more than once. That was the last I saw of the boy. About half past seven the next morning I called him, but got no answer. I turned down his blanket and rug and found him lying partly on his side this face rather towards the side of the ship and downwards in his berth. He was quite cold and dead. (said, 'The poor lad is gone now,' and went and called the mate. I just put up my shirt, and, as I expected, his thigh was black and blue—I believe through beating. I did not tell the captain. I think at the time he struck the boy off the table he was quite intoxicated. The others were reeling the topsails when the captain did this. I considered him intoxicated when they commenced reeling. There has been nothing but rows all the way home. He did not punish or strike any one else—the poor boy had to suffer for all. I have seen the captain intoxicated many times. We quarrelled with the captain after the death of the lad."

After the inquiry was concluded before the local magistrates, Mr. Cornish read over the depositions, and they were agreed. The charge against the captain was then altered from one of beating and ill-usage to one of murder; and he was asked if he had anything to say why he should not be committed to take his trial on that charge? He said, "I reserve my defence." He was then formally committed for trial for wilful murder, and the witnesses were bound over to give evidence against him. The captain is a middle-aged, determined-looking man, but seemed somewhat cowed when his committal took place. We understand he has a wife and four children in Montrose. The Mars belongs to Mr. George Kidd, shipowner of Dundee.

MURDER OF AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.

ELIZABETH ORAM, a married woman, recently murdered her illegitimate son, about ten years of age. It appeared from the evidence adduced before the coroner that the little fellow had been for a long time subjected to barbarous treatment, being kept on unwholesome and insufficient food, and at times severely beaten. The poor boy had often been seen by the neighbours, going to the pigs' trough and devouring eagerly such refuse as the pigs had not eaten. Others had been induced to strip the child and examine his person, when his mangled body was found to be covered with excoriations and bruises. Commiserating the child's unhappy condition, the neighbours used occasionally to give him pieces of bread and meat, and would gladly have continued to do so, but that the mother, whose desire seemed to be to get the boy out of her way, began a few months since to keep him in the house altogether, saying that he was not well. Upon his death becoming known, a communication was made to the coroner. Evidence was soon adduced to justify a criminal charge against the mother, who was arrested as she was completing her toilet to attend the funeral of the boy. The jury returned a verdict of "Wilful murder against Elizabeth Oram," the mother, and the Coroner at once issued his warrant for her committal to prison.

THE FRAUDS ON THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

REDPATH and Kent have been again examined. More evidence was given to show how Redpath had sold stock which only existed by his fraudulent entries in the books. In selling it, names were forged, to make it appear that not Redpath but other persons were the sellers; the persons elected really having no stock belonging to them at the time. It was stated, that by certain entries by Redpath the company had been defrauded of £7,250 of B stock. One of the witnesses occupies a peculiar position; Mr. S. G. Hammond's name has been used and forged by Redpath in selling stock. Mr. Hammond is called to prove this, and the gentleman states that in his youth he was supported and educated by Redpath—he lived with him. The inquiry was again adjourned. The question has been repeatedly asked how it was that Redpath could communicate with the bona fide purchasers of the forged stock, so as to pay them at the proper periods the amounts of dividends to which they were entitled. The manner in which this delicate task was managed is worthy of the genius and ability which Mr. Leopold Redpath brought to bear in his general transactions. In a case, for instance, where he issued £200 worth of stock in a fictitious name, and sold it on the Stock Exchange to a bona fide purchaser, he afterwards increased the amount by prefixing the figure "1," which made it £1,200. As the registrar, he had, of course, to sign the warrants for the dividends; but in the case of a fraudulent transaction, instead of sending the party the dividend warrant in the regular way, he would, at the proper time, and for the proper amount, send a cheque, signed "Leopold Redpath, Registrar." The addition of the word "Registrar" appears to have been amply sufficient, for some knew they ought to have had the regular dividend warrants, but who, as they got the proper sums, at the proper time, appear to have troubled their heads no further about the affair.

CONVICTION OF SNELL.

William Snell, late clerk on the Great Northern Railway, pleaded Guilty at the Old Bailey, on Tuesday, to the charges of embezzlement preferred against him by the Company. The details have appeared in previous numbers of the "Illustrated Times." The prisoner's counsel urged for the merciful consideration of the Court. The prisoner had not embezzled the money to defray extravagancies—the contrary, he lived in a very moderate style. He had been led into the commission of the crime through speculating in the City, and he had taken the money of the Company to meet his losses.—Sentence deferred.

BEATING A WIFE WITH A RED-HOT POKER.—At the Bradford Borough Court on Saturday, Thomas Scully, an Irishman, was charged with this offence. On Tuesday week, the prisoner, while quarrelling with his wife, and lighting his pipe with a red-hot poker, suddenly attacked her with it, striking her repeatedly on the face, neck, and right arm, scorching her flesh dreadfully; indeed, leaving a brand in three several places. He was committed for four months to hard labour in the Wakefield House of Correction.

ROYAL BRITISH BANK.—Judgment upon the appeal by the official manager from the decision of the Vice-Chancellor was delivered by the Lords Justices on Friday morning. The Vice-Chancellor's decision, supporting the adjudication in Bankruptcy, was confirmed. The costs of the motion and the injunction were allowed. The question of the official manager's costs was reserved; he being allowed to retain the sum of £20,000, by way of indemnity in respect of any liabilities he may have incurred. All other assets in his hands are to be assigned to the official assignee in Bankruptcy.

POLICE.

A BOARDING-SCHOOL INTERIOR.

ON Friday week, at Wandsworth Police Court, Sophia Myers, a thin, wretchedly-attired middle-aged woman, who was described as a school-mistress, residing at No. 26, Farnborough Terrace, Bridge Road West, Battersea, was charged with wilfully neglecting a child named Maria Bailey, aged eleven years, who had been entrusted to her care, whereby her life had been placed in imminent danger.

A constable of the V division, deposed that on Thursday night he went to a house in the Bridge Road West, Battersea, occupied by the prisoner, and in the front parlour he found two children lying apparently in a dying state. There was no bedding, or anything of that kind, but there were some filthy clothes and something in the shape of a bed or mattress. They lay on an old nighingale each, but he could not tell of what description they were from the colour of them. In the back room, on the same floor, he found two females, daughters of the prisoner. There was no furniture in the room, but an old mattress in the corner, upon which one of them was lying, and she had a large dog in her arms. He then went upstairs, and in one of the rooms he found four little children and a young woman, all crunched down in front of the grate, in which there was no fire. They were sitting upon an old mattress, which was the only article in the room. The elder female, who said she was twenty-five years of age, begged of him to take her away. From the ragged and filthy state of the children, and their appearance indicating that they had been half-starved, he called in Mr. Wheeler, one of the medical officers of the parish, to see them. The mother of one of the children in the front parlour, who it was expected would die in a very few hours, was in the house, and said the child had been most shamefully neglected, and she gave the prisoner into custody. Witness asked her who the children belonged to, and she said they were gentlemen's children entrusted to her care. She also said a boy, one of the children he found upstairs, was her own child. This one appeared cleaner and healthier than the others. He found half a loaf in the house, and a very small quantity of butter. In a box he found six herrings among some dirty linen, and about half a pound of uncooked meat. Three sovereigns and some silver were found upon her.

The prisoner, who spoke with considerable volubility, said it was a great mistake to say that the children were in want of food. She had been up for some nights watching the sick child, and consequently the other children were neglected. She loved the children too much to neglect them.

Mrs. Harriet Bailey, as then sworn. She appeared deeply affected, and said the prisoner had had charge of one of her children, named Maria, aged eleven years. Witness became acquainted with the school by an advertisement, and she was to pay the prisoner eighteen pence a year. The prisoner had a very nice school when witness first saw her. Witness did not make inquiries at the time, as she thought it was all right, and she did not hear anything of the prisoner until she received a letter from her, dated from Duke Street, Chelsea, stating that she had removed. Witness wrote to her, desiring that her child should be brought home, and complained that she had no right to remove her child without her permission. She did not restore the child. On Monday the prisoner sent her another letter, this time from Battersea, stating that the quarter's money was due, and that the child was poorly. The next day she sent a woman to her saying that her child was in a dying state. Witness immediately hastened to the house and found her child dying. It was in a most dirty and filthy state, quite sufficient to produce a fever. The prisoner said she had done all she could for the child, and made an excuse for not sending her home that she could not find witness. There was a boy lying on a bundle of rags in the corner of the same room, also very ill. There was no hope of her child living. Witness had no doubt the little boy was in want, for she was there a few hours, and its lips were not wetted with anything except what her nurse gave the child. Witness heard the cry of another child upstairs, but the prisoner denied that there were any other children in the house. Witness was there again on Thursday, and she then saw other children in the house who had a similar appearance to what her own child had, and she determined upon calling in a police constable.

Three of the children were here brought into the court, and their appearance excited the sympathy and commiseration of every person. They were pale, dirty, their clothes ragged, their heads bare, and their hair discoloured. The young woman, who said she was twenty-five, was also brought into court, and presented a most dejected appearance; her clothes being dirty and ragged. The prisoner represented the young woman to be insane. She sensibly replied, however, to the questions put to her, and said her name was Coughlan, and that her mother, who would not allow her to remain at home, had placed her with the prisoner to board and lodge. She had been with her six years, and she wished to leave in consequence of the irregularity and filth of the house. Her father was a clergyman, but was dead; and her uncle, a barrister, was living at Notting Hill.

One of the children was examined, and said she had plenty to eat and drink, and had no complaint to make.

The prisoner said all the children would have been sent home on Thursday right if it had not been for Mrs. Bailey's commotion. The house they had taken in Battersea was not furnished, and she believed the illness of the children was caused through it. She had attended Mrs. Bailey's child, which was taken ill on the 5th inst., and she sent four or five letters to Mrs. Bailey, but she could not find her out until a few days back. Through the illness she had not had time to put up the beds, which were lying in the rooms. The children had plenty to eat and drink, and were only neglected while the other child had been ill.

The Magistrate thought the particular case under his notice had not been proved, for it appeared that she had attended to the child while it was ill, and had given it the nourishment ordered by the doctor; but, at the same time, there appeared to be gross neglect towards the other children, in not keeping them clean. The case was nothing more nor less than another Dotheboys' Hall, so far as he could make out. A person takes a house—it is well furnished—receives pupils by advertisement—and then suddenly decamps. What is the inference from such conduct?

A gentleman here rose and said he had known the prisoner for some time, and he believed her to be a very good woman. He could assure his Worship, from his own knowledge, that the prisoner had not been paid by the parents of the children, and one boy, she said, did not even know where its parents were.

The Magistrate said he should discharge the prisoner on her own recognisances. The prisoner was then liberated, after giving the addresses of the children's respective parents. The three children in Court, and also the young woman, were then removed to the workhouse, and two other children at the prisoner's house were also directed to be removed to the same place.

AN INFANT ASSASSIN.—Thomas Beales, a repulsive-looking little boy seven years of age, was playing at marbles in Elder Walk, Islington, when George Chilton, a boy of thirteen, accidentally kicked one of the boys. Beales threatened Chilton, and on meeting him the same evening, respected his threats, and roundly swore that he would stick his (Thomas Beales') knife into him. Chilton replied that he would box Beales's ears, on which Beales rushed at him, and stabbed him in the breast. The poor boy was taken to a surgeon's, and only after some days had elapsed was pronounced to be doing well. Beales was taken into custody, and badly admitted the offence. He was remanded.

ODD AFFAIR.—Anna Meander was recently charged at the Thames Police Court with meditating self-destruction. A policeman stated, that soon after twelve o'clock on Saturday night, the prisoner was brought to him by a man who said he found her about to throw herself into the Regent's Canal from the Stinkhouse Bridge, in Salmon's Lane. Witness saw a letter pinned to her bonnet, and from the direction on it, went to a chandler's shop in Salmon's Lane, and was there informed that she largely indulged in intoxicating drink.

The prisoner, in defence, said she never intended to drown herself. She had a letter in her possession on Saturday night, and pinned it to her bonnet to preserve it. She then sat down on the parapet of the Stinkhouse Bridge, and a young man came up to her, and made love to her, and when she would not listen to him, he charged her with intending to drown herself.

Magistrate.—You had no intention of drowning yourself?

The prisoner.—Not the least.

Magistrate.—Or to poison yourself?

The prisoner.—Not I, sir.

Magistrate.—You are discharged; but don't sit on the parapet of Stinkhouse Bridge at twelve o'clock at night any more.

LONDON GAZETTE.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12.

BANKRUPTS.—CHARLES PEARSON, Park Street, Camberwell, and Lime Street, City, ship owner.—FREDERICK TRESEN HUNT, Watling Street, City, warehouseman.—HENRY GOSPEY, Castle Street, Henry Davis, Deptford, builder.—THOMAS CAVELL, of Adon Manor, Warwickshire, victualler.—JOHN JONES, Aberystwith, Cardiganshire, draper.—LEWIS BARNES, City Road, floor cloth manufacturer.—GEORGE MONTGOMERY, Worcester, grocer.—JOHN PARR, Wolverhampton, woollen draper.—THOMAS BALE, Kidderminster, builder.—WILLIAM FLECHER ROBERTS, Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire, apothecary.—BENJAMIN RICHARDS, Newport, Monmouthshire, sail maker.—SAMUEL GEORGE KIDD, Kingston-upon-Hull, seed crusher.—MAJOR K. JACOB, Jarrow, Durham, brick manufacturer.

SCOTCH SEQUESTRATIONS.—JAMES ADAM, Cupar-Angus, Forfarshire, grocer.—JOHN SCARLE and GEORGE ADAMS, Royal, general merchants.—WILLIAM BRODIE JAMES, Glasgow, jeweller.—WILLIAM MCCUE, Junr., Glasgow, grain merchant.—JAMES RIDDICK, Dumfries, clothier.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16.

BANKRUPTS.—HENRY CHRISTIAN, Mincing Lane, City, coffee merchant.—SAMUEL GOSPEY, Mark Lane, City, sail cloth and canvas merchant.—JOSEPH LOADER, Walworth, upholsterer.—CHARLES HENRY DAVIS, Deptford, builder.—THOMAS CAVELL, of Adon Manor, Warwickshire, victualler.—JOHN JONES, Aberystwith, Cardiganshire, draper.—TOM FOWLER SLATER, Bradford, Yorkshire, grocer.—JOSEPH LEEMING, Junr., Hartlepool, ironmonger.—ABRAHAM JAMES, ROSE JACOB, and HENRY JACOB, Crown Street, Finsbury, merchants.—HARVEY ROSE, Lynn, milliner.—RICHARD GRIFFITHS the elder, and RICHARD GRIFFITHS the younger, Hatton Wall, brass founders.—WILLIAM FRASER, Leeds, cabinetmaker.—RICHARD WILLIAMS, Liverpool, tailor.—MESSRS. STYER, WATER, and Co., Liverpool and London, merchants.—WILLIAM JAMES HEATHFIELD and WILLIAM AUCHINCLOSS, Princes Square, Finsbury, manufacturing chemists.—SCOTCH SEQUESTRATIONS.—WILLIAM SIMPSON, Perth, plasterer.—DAVID SCOTT COLLINS, Perth, clothier.—ROBERT WATSON, Campbeltown, upholsterer.—ALEXANDER BANNATYNE, Glasgow, merchant.

MONEY OPERATIONS OF THE WEEK.

As soon as only a moderate business has been transacted in the money market, prices generally have been well supported. In money, the demand continues very active, and the supply is not so liberal. The rate of discount is 4 per cent. At the Bank of England, the applications for a loan have been very numerous, but we believe that the Directors have made liberal advances. The improved position of the funds, both in respect to the stock of bullion and the amount of the public debt, is a most favourable circumstance, and is a material element that we have now passed the worst period of the money crisis. The immensity of our trade, however, seems to forbid the supposition that we shall have money much cheaper than it now is. At the same time, there are certain indications of a future range in discounts. The fact that the East India Company has lowered the rate at which it will in future draw bills on the various Presidencies by two per cent, is a strong proof that we shall have less occasion to forward such heavy supplies of silver to India. That metal has, consequently, declined 1/2 per ounce in our market, and several large parcels of fine plate have been shipped to the Continent. If we manage to retain here all the silver about to arrive from Mexico, to adjust the Continental exchanges, we shall not have occasion to send gold to France and Germany, and the stock in the Bank will steadily increase. The money market, however, is not so liberal. The rate of discount is 4 per cent. Consols for the account have been down at 91 1/2. The New 4 per cents, 93 1/2. The Reduced, 93 1/2. India Bonds have marked 28. 10s. 2d. prem. Exchequer Bills, 5s. 10s. prem. and Exchequer Bonds, 98 1/2.

In the foreign market, only a moderate business has been transacted, yet we have no material change to notice in the quotations. Turkish 6 per cents have realised 94 1/2. Turkish 4 per cents, 92 1/2. Danish 4 per cents, 85. Granada, active, 21 1/2. Guatemala, 38. Mexico 4 per cents, 21 1/2. Peruvian 4 per cents, 27. Russian 4 per cents, 28. Spanish, 30. Siam, 12. 1/2. Straits, 12. 1/2. Dutch 2 1/2 per cents, 65. The 4 per cents, 12. 1/2. French 4 per cents, 91 1/2. 48. Most railway shares have advanced, as follows:—Ambergate, Nottingham, and Boston, 41. Bristol and Exeter, 93. 1/2. Caledonian, 41. East Anglian, 36. Eastern Counties, 91. East Lancashire, 88. Great Eastern, 60. Lancashire and Yorkshire, 57. London and Brighton, 111. London and North Western, 50. London and South Western, 67. Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire, 34. Midland, 82. North Eastern, 73. 1/2. do. York, 60. South Devon, 81. South Eastern, 73 1/2. Vale of North, 19. Joint stock banks have been very firm in price. Bank of England, 100. London, 100. Westminster, 100. New, 20. London and County, 30. Ottoman, 11. Union of Australia, 60. In Miscellaneous Securities only a moderate business has been transacted. Australian Agricultural have marked 25. Berlin water works, 41. Canada Company's bonds, 114. do. Government, 100. do. 5 per cents, 100. do. 4 per cents, 100. do. 3 per cents, 100. do. 2 per cents, 100. do. 1 per cent, 100. do. 1/2 per cent, 100. do. 1/4 per cent, 100. do. 1/8 per cent, 100. do. 1/16 per cent, 100. do. 1/32 per cent, 100. do. 1/64 per cent, 100. do. 1/128 per cent, 100. do. 1/256 per cent, 100. do. 1/512 per cent, 100. do. 1/1024 per cent, 100. do. 1/2048 per cent, 100. do. 1/4096 per cent, 100. do. 1/8192 per cent, 100. do. 1/16384 per cent, 100. do. 1/32768 per cent, 100. do. 1/65536 per cent, 100. do. 1/131072 per cent, 100. do. 1/262144 per cent, 100. do. 1/524288 per cent, 100. do. 1/1048576 per cent, 100. do. 1/2097152 per cent, 100. do. 1/4194304 per cent, 100. do. 1/8388608 per cent, 100. do. 1/16777216 per cent, 100. do. 1/33554432 per cent, 100. do. 1/67108864 per cent, 100. do. 1/134217728 per cent, 100. do. 1/268435456 per cent, 100. do. 1/536870912 per cent, 100. do. 1/1073741824 per cent, 100. do. 1/2147483648 per cent, 100. do. 1/4294967296 per cent, 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1/1152921504606846976 per cent, 100. do. 1/2305843009213693952 per cent, 100. do. 1/4611686018427387904 per cent, 100. do. 1/9223372036854775808 per cent, 100. do. 1/18446744073709551616 per cent, 100. do. 1/36893488147419103232 per cent, 100. do. 1/73786976294838206464 per cent, 100. do. 1/147573952589676412928 per cent, 100. do. 1/295147905179352825856 per cent, 100. do. 1/590295810358705651712 per cent, 100. do. 1/1180591620717411303424 per cent, 100. do. 1/2361183241434822606848 per cent, 100. do. 1/4722366482869645213696 per cent, 100. do. 1/9444732965739290427392 per cent, 100. do. 1/18889465931478580854784 per cent, 100. do. 1/37778931862957161709568 per cent, 100. do. 1/75557863725914323419136 per cent, 100. do. 1/151115727451828646838272 per cent, 100. do. 1/302231454903657293676544 per cent, 100. do. 1/604462909807314587353088 per cent, 100. do. 1/1208925819614629174706176 per cent, 100. do. 1/2417851639229258349412352 per cent, 100. do. 1/4835703278458516698824704 per cent, 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